

A culture of *inclusion*

A diverse work force contributes to improved business performance through openness, inclusiveness and leadership. by **Rebecca Crichton**

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Virginia (Ying-Hsing) Ling, an information architect in Renton, Wash., is a Taiwanese-American and a member of the Engineering, Operations & Technology Diversity Council: "It's human nature to want to be accepted and to be able to contribute," she says.

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When Boeing leaders talk about diversity and inclusion, they mean business – in more ways than one. At all levels of the enterprise, diversity and inclusion are recognized as critical to Boeing’s success in the global marketplace. And Boeing employees are working in unison to help produce that success.

Employees working together – not in separated, individual efforts – is the key to diversity’s tremendous potential for improv-

ing productivity and growth, says Jim McNerney, Boeing chairman, president and CEO.

“The culture that drives business performance is exactly the same culture that drives diversity, ethics and integrity – all of which work together, mutually reinforcing each other,” he says.

As Joyce Tucker, vice president of Global Diversity and Employee Rights, says: “Diversity is good business and it’s good for business. Focusing all our diversity on the business challenges of our company gives Boeing a competitive advantage.”

continued on page 52

continued from page 51

Tucker said strides have been made in the five years since the Integrated Diversity and EEO Compliance Strategy was designed and implemented. "This strategy was created by a cross-section of people from around the enterprise," she says. "The five goals are the same ones we started with and we're on our way to meeting them. But in the end, the success of the strategy depends on each and every Boeing employee working together to create the environment that values the different background and perspectives that each of them brings to the workplace. This is truly diversity at work."

Tapping employee energy

Most employees get involved in diversity efforts through Affinity Groups and Diversity Councils. But it's only when they come together that their efforts pay off.

Affinity groups are employee associations whose members share a common interest, such as race, gender, or culture. The groups are designed to further personal and professional development, promote diversity, meet new people, enjoy social activities, and network.

Diversity councils are a blend of managers and non-managers. They focus on facilitating implementation of a business unit's diversity plan and on improving engagement, providing learning and leadership opportunities, and increasing communication.

Both groups cultivate activities that allow employees to increase their own diversity awareness and share it with others. They allow employees to develop professionally, to participate in training and education, and to reach out to others at Boeing and in their own communities.

A good example is Brandon Polingyumtewa, a supply chain analyst with Integrated Defense Systems in Mesa, Ariz. He is a Hopi Indian from northeastern Arizona and president of the Boeing American Indian Society in Mesa. Polingyumtewa belongs to all the affinity groups in his area and is also on the diversity council for the Mesa site. His appreciation of the importance of grass roots reflects his Native American culture: "For a tree to grow to its fullest potential, the seed must be nurtured and allowed to grow, but the roots must be strong . . . if the roots are strong, the tree will be strong. The Boeing Company plants the seeds of diversity by offering courses and the opportunities



Joyce Tucker, vice president of Global Diversity and Employee Rights: "Diversity gives Boeing a competitive advantage."

to expand its employees, both professionally and personally, and as the seed matures and develops, an environment of diversity and inclusion begins to materialize."

"People bring with them diverse backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and ways of solving problems," Joyce Tucker says. That applies to Katie Blanton, a procurement agent with BCA Global Partners in Puget Sound and a member of the newly formed Global Partners Diversity Council. Blanton worked as a Boeing intern in college and joined the company full-time in July 2006. She thinks about her culture from a generational perspective. "I discovered that the different generations think differently and offer different values. My generation values getting things done. People see us as hard workers and are somewhat surprised by how much we take on and what a good job we do. By giving us more opportunity to show what we can do we will prove it. We will prove to be valuable assets for higher-level decision making."

Belonging to a diversity council provides Virginia Ling with a place where she knows her contributions are appreciated. Ling is Taiwanese American and works as an integration architect for Boeing Commercial Airplanes Architecture in Everett, Wash. A member of the Engineering, Operations & Technology (EO&T) council, she believes that "people on the council become change agents to allow others to understand the importance of diversity. They do a good job of explaining that it is not just about abiding by the law. It is human nature to want to be accepted and be able to contribute. The council activities can help build that awareness."

Building community, expanding opportunity

Boeing affinity groups also provide primary ways for employees to connect with others who share their interests and gain a leadership foothold. Boeing Women in Leadership (BWIL) in St. Louis sponsors a popular monthly Breakfast of Champions that attracts many employees, especially new hires. Leaders from the St. Louis area discuss their career paths and share strategies and stories about how they succeeded. St. Louis BWIL president Stephanie Wojcik believes that her organization provides learning and leadership opportunities to people who wouldn't necessarily have them in their regular jobs. Wojcik, who works on the St. Louis Engineering Operations staff, notes that gaining management experience is often a Catch-22. "All K-manager positions ask for leadership experience. How would you get that before becoming a manager? Well, you can lead a committee at BWIL to get that experience. Now, you can say you've developed and acquired leadership skills."

Joyce Tucker appreciates the value that affinity groups bring. "This is about each individual Boeing employee recognizing that the culture of inclusion is all of our responsibilities. By signing up for affinity groups and diversity councils, people are saying: 'I want to be part of the inclusion movement at Boeing.'"

That is borne out by Ed Martinez, IT project manager, Computing and Network Organizations support, and a member of the Boeing Hispanic Employees Network in Puget Sound. "At our meetings we welcome all people who have interests in our group. When people first arrive they don't know there are support groups they can join and be part of. New employees of no matter what background have a need for support. The affinity group can provide some comfort and support for them. They find themselves more included and comfortable."

continued on page 55

Unsolicited learning

Sam Morgan may be blind, but his disability has brought him some unexpected benefits



Sam Morgan, a technical team lead in St. Louis, is legally blind as a result of a degenerative condition. But he regards his disability positively. “If I hadn’t had this loss of vision, I wouldn’t have had the same experiences,” he says. “I keep learning new ways of doing things.”

As he gradually began to lose his sight, Sam Morgan could have resigned himself to a world of darkness. Instead, he began to see the light – an awareness of himself and his work colleagues that had hitherto escaped him.

“I am a more diverse person for having lost my sight,” he says. “I’m more open to other people’s opinions and their ideas and their assistance.”

He is also able to help others with similar disabilities, and that gives him satisfaction.

Morgan, a systems design and integration specialist and technical team lead with Computing and Network Operations at Engineering, Operations & Technology in St. Louis, is disabled and does not fall within the usual description of a minority.

Physical Ability is one of the internal dimensions depicted on the Diversity Blueprint often seen in Boeing buildings. But unlike diversity markers that are with us from birth – gender, ethnicity, race and age – physical ability can change suddenly or gradually throughout our lives. That

was the case for Morgan, who was told he was going blind at age 23. He was diagnosed with a ‘textbook case’ of retinitis pigmentosa, a degenerative condition for which there is no cure.

Morgan has adapted well to his condition. Using a white cane, he is able to negotiate seemingly effortlessly through the complicated labyrinth of hallways, stairs and elevators in his St. Louis office building. And he says that being blind has actually brought him some blessings.

“I now recognize the value of others who help me all the time, even though I still like doing things myself,” he says. “I was somewhat arrogant before, but now I have learned that more heads are better than one. My role as team lead is delegation – I’m Mr. Teflon – I pass jobs on to people. ‘Automate and delegate’ are my mottos. I want to work myself out of a job; that’s part of automation.”

Morgan’s disability has helped others with similar problems. He shares the adaptive equipment at his desk with others. He has a flatbed scanner and a device that performs optical character recognition, turning it into text and then announcing whatever is on the page or meeting notice.

“If I hadn’t had this loss of vision, I wouldn’t have the same experiences,” he says. “I keep learning new ways of doing things.”

Rick Stephens: Diversity and the bottom line



Rick Stephens, senior vice president of Human Resources and Administration: "It's not about the specifics of what I believe. It's about what I am able to bring to the table."

Whenever Rick Stephens meets with groups inside and outside Boeing, he usually cuts to the chase with a simple question: "What kind of value can you bring to our company?"

"It's essential to have the right heart, and the right soul, and the right ideas, and the right mind," he will tell audiences that include such groups as his fellow Native Americans. He challenges everyone to ask: How will you use your skills and talents to help us achieve our business goals?

For Stephens, senior vice president of Human Resources and Administration, diversity is about talent, value and the business – the bottom line.

"This is not about the specifics of what I believe," he explains "It's about what I am able to bring to the table. It's all about what I call the value proposition. When people focus on value, it's a great start because now we are speaking the same language.

"Of course, it's people who create our products," he says. "So naturally we want the very best people so we can continue to create the best products and be a leader in our markets. Taking the best of industry and bringing it into Boeing is fundamental to our strategy.

"Diversity of thought is really driven by our backgrounds, by our perspectives," says Stephens, a member of the Pala band of Mission Indians and a former tribal chairman. "What we're striving for is to create an environment where people are all focused on the same objectives, meeting customer expectations, meeting shareholder expectations and meeting employee expectations. When you get all those aligned and you have people who are bringing their different perspectives, you always come up with the best solution that wins in a competitive marketplace."

Value is important not only to the company, he points out, but to the very people who are providing it. "People want to work where they are valued," he says. "And they'll feel valued if they're looked at not because of their gender, their race, their religion, or the color of skin. It will really be driven by the value they bring to be able to support the business objectives."

It's the role of leadership, he says, to create the right environment where everyone has an opportunity bring their capabilities to the table.

The power of creative thought and passionate energy are the twin drivers of business success, he says. "The value that employees bring is really their minds – their critical, complex creative thinking. They also bring their hearts, which is their passion for doing things. And when you get those two connected, and you have the right environment, we create the right solutions for making us globally competitive."

And he makes no distinctions for himself. "I'm proud to be a Native American," he says. "But I have to bring value to Boeing. I have to draw from my background, my education, and my skills and abilities to help Boeing be successful."

Managing diversity

When Boeing Chief Financial Officer James Bell says that diversity is not just a Human Resources issue, he is not discounting the importance of HR in furthering diversity and inclusion. Sandy Rufkahr, director of Phantom Works HR, created the new EO&T Diversity Council, which developed a diversity plan for the EO&T organization. She was impressed by the motivation and knowledge of the council members. "I've never seen a group so passionate about anything," she says. Rufkahr has a particular appreciation for how seriously Boeing is committed to diversity. A friend working in a governmental department revealed that her organization didn't collect diversity metrics. "They didn't track how many females and minorities they had. Boeing does a wonderful job at this. We track women and minorities. We target and recruit from minority colleges."



Ron Morinishi: "Treating people the same isn't enough. We need to be sensitive to the backgrounds and cultures of others."

Souzane Tacawy recently stepped up to the challenge of increasing the number of women employed at the Long Beach, Calif., site. As regional director for Electronics and Avionics Testing at IDS in Southern California, she was asked to draft a plan to reverse the underutilization of female employees.

"When we started looking at the data, we discovered we didn't have females in lower levels, so when a requisition opened up internally, there were no women at those levels who could apply. We had to build a pool to get more women, and we needed to partner with external groups to get the word out to increase that pool." They gave plotted charts from the last five years to hiring managers to show how they could make a difference. It worked: The Long Beach site has been in the green for utilization of women since 2005.

Tacawy adds, "Our commitment to inclusion has resulted in better business for us in terms of motivated and engaged employees. Women and minority employees are encouraged when they see employees like them progressing at all levels in the organization. It motivates them to focus on performance to ensure that they, too, can move up."

She notes that the majority of Long Beach employees participating in the Boeing employee survey said diversity was valued in their work group, that the ideas and opinions of all



Victor Hill: "Diversity is a necessity, not a luxury. Cultural isolation limits potential." Every person, every idea brings about global solutions, he says.

employees mattered. "That clearly motivates the employees to bring more ideas forward, which results in better organizational performance."

One result was that in 2007, a reorganization created opportunities in the region. "There was a good pool of women and minorities especially from Long Beach," she says. Three women, including her, were promoted to M-level manager positions. Another two were promoted to E-series positions.

"The others promoted along with me were all highly talented people who were given an opportunity to show that they help Boeing to succeed," she says. "Recognizing them was clearly a good business proposition."

The opposite of exclusion

Asking people what inclusion means to them elicits stories of personal discovery. People know what it feels like to be excluded. And when the environment changes to one of inclusion, the result is deep appreciation and sense of commitment.

Gerald Stanley, a systems engineer on the Space Shuttle at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, knows what inclusion has meant for him. "It's when everybody is valued for who they are, no matter what their background, ethnicity, religion or culture."

Stanley is vice president of the Florida chapter of BEA-GLES, the Boeing Employees Association of Gays, Lesbians and Friends. "I was reluctant to reveal my own sexual preference in the past. I turned 40 two years ago and I have heard many jokes and innuendos. I was tired of hearing them. Since I came out, that kind of thing doesn't happen in front of me, but it still happens."

Stanley also wants to help make it easy for others, especially new hires. "We need to protect employees from harassment and make this an attractive place to work. It has to be safe and comfortable for African Americans, gays and lesbians, and others to work for Boeing."

Brian Lee, who has a Korean heritage, struggled with his identity.

A project manager on the 787 Program, Lee actively began exploring his Korean roots in college. "I look Korean and think American," he says.

A member of the new Global Partners Diversity Council and BAAPA, the Boeing Asian-American Professional Association, Lee says "You want to be part of the mainstream, but because of how you look, you think you don't fit."

He went to Korea to work as an engineering intern, to learn the language – and the culture. Embedded in many Asian languages, for example, is respect for elders and positions of authority.

"The way I speak with my dad is different from how I speak to other people," says Lee. "Another world opens up to us when we learn the language."

Jesus Elizondo, an IDS Production Controls manager in St. Louis and co-lead of the diversity council for St. Louis Operations and Supplier Management, says, "With the diversity message we're changing our perspective of how we do business for the future. I learned a long time ago that working with people allows you to drive success."

continued on page 56

continued from page 55

One way of leading

“Everyone can be a leader of diversity and inclusion,” Joyce Tucker often says.

Victor Hill, a function manager for Spacecraft Products Manufacturing Support and Material Requirements Planning at the Satellite Development Center in El Segundo, Calif., set out to prove it. After attending the Global Diversity Summit in California, Hill spoke about it at his Toastmasters club.

“I learned that diversity is a necessity, not a luxury, and that cultural isolation limits potential,” he says. “If we include everyone, we include every idea possible for global solutions.”

Hill says: “Inclusion to me is the creation of ideas for improvement, implementation of those ideas, and the measurement of success. It is inviting others to share openly and without fear of retaliation or disrespect. I believe that we can learn from almost everyone we meet. And we learn not only from success but from failure as well.”

Hustle and slowdown

Commitment by senior leaders to diversity drives the message down. Employee involvement spreads the message. And managers play a major role in the consistent modeling and demonstration of diversity awareness for employees.

When Ron Morinishi moved to St. Louis two years ago, he realized it was culturally different from California, where he

“The understanding and practice of diversity and inclusion should be viewed as a critical leadership skill.”

– Ron Morinishi

was reared and worked for many years. Morinishi, a manager in Phantom Works’ Systems and Subsystems Technology area, belongs to the EO&T diversity council and is the head of the local St. Louis EO&T Diversity Council. He is also a member of the Boeing Asian-American Professional Association.

“People think it’s enough to treat people the same,” he says. “If they do that, then it’s okay. I try to preach that isn’t enough. We need to be sensitive to others’ background and cultures and use that to enhance our daily work.”

Morinishi believes understanding and practice of diversity and inclusion should be viewed as a critical leadership skill and part of everybody’s job, especially managers.

“They have to learn it, practice it and teach it to others,” he says.

Joyce Tucker agrees. “We’re having conversations about how to reach out and access all the talent that’s available to us in our recruiting,” she says. “We want potential employees to know that Boeing is an open and inclusive environment. A culture that values diverse employees will be the kind of culture that will attract talented people who can work effectively with others to achieve the goals of our company.

“Recognizing, leveraging and bringing together the unique contributions that all employees offer to the workplace makes Boeing one company and a great place to work.” ■



Brandon Polingyumptewa: Like a tree, he says, Boeing needs strong roots. “Boeing plants the seeds of diversity by offering courses and the opportunities to expand its employees, both professionally and personally.”



Gerald Stanley: “It has to be safe and comfortable for African Americans, gays and lesbians, and others to work for Boeing.”



Jesus Elizondo: “With the diversity message, we’re changing our perspective of how we do business for the future.”

Carla Williams: Getting involved



Carla Williams, Black Engineer of the Year for 2007: “Inclusion means being listened to and having your opinions valued.”

Carla Williams believes in going outside the box – even outside of Boeing – to get involved.

It took her work with children and other programs at Boeing-sponsored external events to discover a wealth of expertise within her own company.

Williams, who works with the support program office on the Mobile User Objective System at Integrated Defense Systems in El Segundo, Calif., donates her time to a variety of volunteer activities, including teaching children about math at the Boeing Summer Science Camp in Huntington Beach, Calif.

“It is important for them to see that there are women in science and engineering,” she says. Williams is past president of the Huntington Beach Boeing Black Employees Association and has volunteered with the Black Engineer of the Year (BEYA) organization for three years. In addition to its conference recognizing people in the industry, the BEYA organization also holds a conference for college students, encouraging

them to continue their education and go to work for companies like Boeing.

Recently, Williams won the national 2007 Black Engineer of the Year award, accepting it in Baltimore at the annual BEYA conference. “When I was involved with BEYA, I realized there were many recognized experts on my same campus in California, and I hadn’t known them. As a result of meeting those people at Baltimore, I set up an event at Boeing with people right on our own campus.”

Williams recognizes the importance of grass-roots efforts for deepening diversity and inclusion. “The grass-roots movement gets at the heart of what interests people,” she says. “People are interested in what they would like to improve for themselves, how they’d like to initiate change and how they’d like to help others.”

She strongly believes in the power of inclusion. “Inclusion means having a seat at the table,” she says. “It means being listened to and having your opinions valued. It also means being afforded the same opportunities as everyone else.”