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WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

To the Front: Companies Look to Set Examples Within Own Communities

The task of leading diversity, equity and inclusion at companies has evolved from a role not seen as a priority into a critical component in every facet of operations. While the past three years have been a catalyst for advancements in workplace equality, there still lie challenges in instilling a healthy workplace.

Conversations on how to tackle those issues continued at a town hall hosted by **The WICT Network** and **NAMIC** Tuesday, with executives discussing the results of the freshly released the **AIM/PAR** Workplace Diversity Survey and the status of ethnic and gender diversity in the industry. WICT and NAMIC's research found representation of women in the industry jumped from 33% to 38% since the poll was last conducted in 2019. However, people of color saw a 7-percentage point drop in workforce representation, going from 44% three years ago to 37%.

With the last survey happening before COVID-19 disrupted the world, the results give insight into how the industry and its workforce have changed, especially on the heels of "The Great Resignation" and "Quiet Quitting." If there's a positive to take from the pandemic, though, it's that it forced many to learn the art of flexibility. **Midco** Chief HR Officer *Ann McGlennen* said it wasn't just employees who needed to be flexible over the past couple of years, but also the company's leaders.

During the pandemic, Midco's leaders were aware that not

every employee will feel the same level of comfort regarding a return to the office. That's what caused them to focus on an empathetic approach to workplace requirements and managing employees, which has in turn helped with retention rates.

"Providing the flexibility and realizing, 'Hey, guess what? Our productivity went up and there are different ways of work and providing people different options on what they were comfortable with,'" *McGlennen* said. "Just being very open-minded and increasing empathy as leaders, it's been the number one thing that has helped us retain our women and everybody."

Charter adopted a similar, flexible approach to work policies that still remains today. SVP & Chief Diversity Officer *Rhonda Crichlow* said the company didn't adopt a uniform policy because certain positions, such as technicians and other frontline workers, don't have the ability to work from home. While a difficult road to navigate, it hasn't impacted what the company wants to focus on, with increasing representation high on the task list.

But even with companies making changes to become more inclusive, representation is a major part of retention. **Cox Communications** EVP & Chief People Officer *Kia Painter* said people of color want to be able to see someone like them succeeding in high-level positions so that they can believe they can flourish at a company. So, the company has numerous ambassadors who do outreach in communities and with partner organizations to display evidence that those from all backgrounds can find a place within the company. **Comcast**



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Cable has taken a similar approach to highlight the broad range of talent that can make impacts within the industry. “We wanted people to see that women are a key part of this industry, and when we see them, we want them to grow and prosper and fulfill their hopes and dreams. But we also want them to tell our story and be present in the rooms to attract the talent to showcase that Comcast is a great company,” said *Loren Hudson*, SVP & Chief Diversity Officer, Comcast Cable.

Aisha Thomas-Petit, Chief People & Diversity Officer at **AMC Networks**, reiterated Painter’s points on celebrating those who have broken barriers, adding that AMCN uses its business resource groups as a way to gather referrals in areas the network sees gaps in representation. AMC Networks also relies on partners like the **T. Howard Foundation** to establish a pipeline of talent of young, diverse employees.

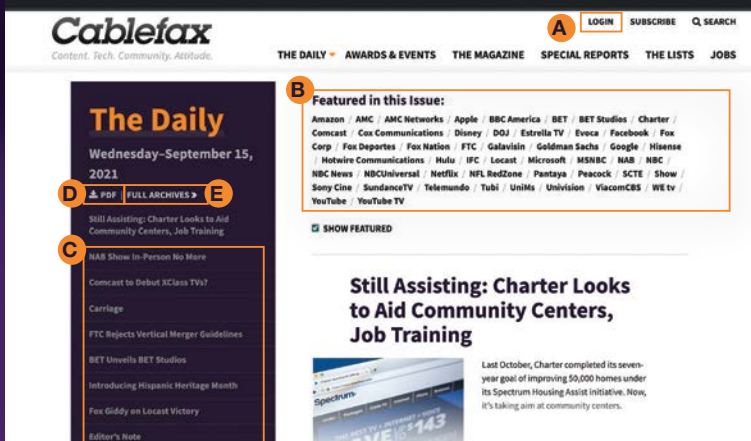
Representation doesn’t stop at ethnicity. It’s about finding people from various backgrounds who haven’t been given a seat at the table. With studies and surveys shining a brighter light on how minority groups are being represented in the industry in all levels, it’s now about putting that information to action where it’s needed.

“A general area that we have to be sensitive to, and particularly when we think of people of color, is not assuming that the experience of every community that’s representative within people of color is the same,” Crichlow said. “We have an opportunity as an industry to continue to dig deeper into some of the data to better understand if there are significant trends that may be impacting one segment of that industry more so than others.”

AIM/PAR SURVEY ON INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

The results of the 2022 **AIM/PAR** Workplace Diversity Survey are in, showing the trends and changes in the DEI realm for media, entertainment and technology companies. The poll—last conducted in 2019—gives an opportunity to see how the workplace has changed since the beginning of the pandemic and the following years. While there were gains for women, people of color did not fare as well, with workforce representation dropping to 37% from 44%. The biggest decrease occurred with junior-level professional and manager positions at MSOs. In 2021, 52% of job vacancies were filled by people of color—down from 57% since 2019. For programmers, however, its hiring rates exceed the industry average by 6%. People of color were promoted and transferred in their respective companies at 14% and 8% rates, respectively. The survey found representation of women in the industry is up 5% to 38% since 2019, despite being more impacted in employment by the pandemic. Women made up 47% of all new hires in media, technology and entertainment, a 15% boost from three years ago. Women of color in the workforce jumped 6% since 2019, with the percentage of women of color going up in professional and managerial positions by 8% each and executive/senior positions by 3%. “We just have to keep putting the data in front of them, commissioning our own data and holding these town halls with all the right people in the room or on the stream to make sure that we’re teaching them the things that we’ve learned that we’re doing right and well. And just as important, the things that we need to course correct now so we don’t have slippage,” **WICT Network** President/CEO *Maria Brennan* told **CFX**.

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GEORGE FLOYD'S DEATH A TURNING POINT

A **NAMIC** Annual Conference panel Tuesday delved into whether the death of *George Floyd* was a catalyst for change, and the consensus was yes. “It represented truly a movement and not a moment. When we talk about post *George Floyd* it is dot-dot-dot [an ellipsis] because this is infinity,” said **BLP Studios** Founder/CEO *Jason Farmer*. “Now that this conversation has been brought to the forefront, we need to make sure that the commitments made that we have the metrics in place to measure those commitments to hold them accountable.” After *Floyd's* murder, **REVOLT** saw brands step up and want to be better corporate citizens. **REVOLT News** and **REVOLT Studios** head *Monique Chenault* praised *State Farm* as an incredible partner that is sponsoring coverage and dialogue for social justice related topics with the network. “They don’t step in editorially at all and have really empowered us to be able to tell these kinds of stories from a completely unapologetic Black point of view,” she said. **REVOLT** was also impacted by *Floyd's* death. “Before that, we really weighed more heavily on entertainment, music and hip hop. After *George Floyd*... we saw that this is a critical place where we need to have a voice. We needed to fill in the gap and it needed to come from a network that was not only Black-owned and Black-targeted, but Black-operated.” *Galen Gordon*, SVP of Talent Strategy and Development for **ABC News**, said *Floyd's* murder was a litmus test for a lot of companies to see what sort of practices they had in place. It also opened the door for a lot of important conversations. In May 2020, *Gordon* was at **NFL Media**. “There was some meaningful change where financial resources were thrown at projects and there were some really intense conversations throughout the company—like Zoom pages, you know pandemic Zooms, with eight, nine pages of people of color expressing their hurt and pain,” he recalled. “*George Floyd* presented the opportunity for companies to hold the mirror up themselves to answer that very question—what are we doing and what do you want to be as an organization going forward?” When a member of the audience asked if today’s DEI conversations run the risk of becoming a fad and fading away, moderator and **NBC News** Anchor/Correspondent *Sheinelle Jones* said she didn’t think today’s public with its demands for transparency and authenticity as well as its use of social media would allow it. “If you don’t give them the news, they will go somewhere else,” she said.

WICT CONFERENCE NOTEBOOK

Could workspaces in the future have no offices? It might already be a trend, with companies like **Liberty Global**, **Amazon Web Services** and **Comcast** opting for settings that are designed to encourage collaboration. But office space has become an interesting subject as many companies look for efficient ways to host employees while remaining flexible. At a panel discussion on what future workplaces look like, Comcast EVP Administration *Karen Dougherty Buchholz* mentioned how despite the company requiring employees to come into the office certain days of the week, it invested in technological tools for employees to utilize while at home. AWS Director, Global Media & Entertainment

Samira Panah Bakhtiar also said Amazon sought the same type of investment, but as other companies are doing, Amazon hasn’t enforced a company-wide requirement. “We realized that remote work, in some capacity, some teams really thrive in a low capacity and others don’t. So having that flexibility is very key in terms of determining when and how often to come in,” she said. *Liberty Global* had continued to have a similar style when it comes to letting company directors determine what’s best for their teams, but for those working fully remote, the lack of social interaction can lead to a negative impact on well-being. That’s why the company has volunteer events to build chemistry and have outreach within communities. – There’s a first for everything, but **Cox Enterprises** President/Chief People and Operations Officer *Jill Campbell* is not only the inaugural recipient of **The WICT Network’s** Fearless Leader Award, but also its namesake. WICT Chair *Sandra Howell* and Vice Chair *Leigh Woisard* announced it will be named “The *Jill Campbell* Fearless Leader Award” going forward to recognize an executive who serves as a role model to others. *Campbell* has been at *Cox* for over 40 years.

PADDEN ARGUES AGAINST C-BAND PROPOSAL

Former **Disney** lobbyist and **C-Band Alliance** executive *Preston Padden* is taking a stand against the aviation community after it proposed the **FCC** codify the restrictions on C-band usage the wireless industry has temporarily agreed to. In an informal comment submitted to the Commission, *Padden* said the agency must say no to the proposal and work instead to implement strict receiver standards, and if it does decide to move forward and consider the proposal, it would be complicating the integrity of its frequency allocations. “The aviation industry has absolutely no legal right to ‘squat’ on the spectrum in the 3.7-3.98 GHz portion of the C-band. None—full stop,” *Padden* said. “**AT&T/Verizon** bought those spectrum usage rights from the U.S. Government for \$82 Billion with absolutely no prior notice of possible restrictions related to altimeter spectrum located hundreds of MHz away.”

BASEBALL'S HOME RUN RATINGS

Baseball is still America’s pastime. Average viewership for **ESPN’s** exclusive coverage of the 2022 “MLB Wild Card Series Presented by Hankook Tire” is up 64% from 2020. **ESPN**, **ESPN2** and **ABC** combined to average 2.8 million viewers across nine games, up substantially from the 1.7 million viewers that tuned in across the 2020 series’ 18 games. Highlights include Game 3 of the *San Diego Padres* vs. *New York Mets* series, which peaked with 4.73 million viewers from 8-8:15pm ET on Oct. 9, and Oct. 8 when Game 2 of both the *Padres* vs. *Mets* series and the *Philadelphia Phillies* vs. *St. Louis Cardinals* series. An average of 6.44 million viewers were watching the games across **ESPN** and **ESPN2** at 10:30pm ET. – **YES Network** viewers consumed more than 10 billion minutes of *New York Yankees* game coverage across the channel and the **YES App** during the 2022 regular season. **YES Network** averaged 368,000 total viewers for those games in the *New York DMA*, a 27% increase YOY and the best measure it has seen since 2011. *Yankees* games averaged more than 694,000 unduplicated total viewers per game with 45 matchups averaging at least 400,000 total viewers.