

# Cablefax Daily™

WHAT THE INDUSTRY READS FIRST

## Take the Leap: Experts Encourage Industry to Embrace AI Innovation

The best approach for companies or individuals looking to enhance their AI implementation is to overcome the fear associated with it and just start experimenting, according to professionals from **Accenture, FreeWheel, Cisco** and **Amazon Web Services** during a **WICT Leadership Conference** general session Monday.

“We are at the early stages—no one is behind. I believe that AI is not going to replace leaders, but leaders who use AI will replace those who don’t,” said *Soo Jin Oh*, Chief Strategy Officer for FreeWheel, a **Comcast** company. “I believe that AI is the next major transformation that is going to permeate our lives. Think about the internet. Think about smartphones. If you as a leader don’t know how to use the internet or smartphones, you’re kind of obsolete, right? Similarly, we’re in early stages, but AI is going to be something that everyone will have to touch, feel and embrace.”

One suggestion for jumpstarting AI in an organization is to take young, entry-level employees who are already embracing these tools and integrate them across multiple teams. “We staffed those 22- and 23-year-olds into teams, not necessarily into formal roles, but because they just fundamentally look at the work we’re doing and say, ‘Oh, wait. We could use this tool to do this and this tool to do that.’ We’ve infused some of that talent so that it is much more organic...and not nearly as scary,” said *Laura Peterson*, Accenture’s Senior Managing Director, Americas Operations Lead.

The best way to get employees to use AI is to show real-life

examples of how it can help people do their jobs. Peterson described how a Microsoft call center team used to sit down with new employees and go through a handful of calls to give them some coaching. With AI, the team has developed something that can review 100% of call transcripts from their first two weeks on the job and provide coaching to a much broader data set.

The idea is to work more efficiently. “It does not replace a software engineer, period, full stop. However, it really helps augment the development process,” explained Cisco SVP, Americas Service Provider *John Dorval*. “They can make test cases. They can streamline troubleshooting. And now all the software engineers I know, they don’t like to do that stuff anyway, so it is a great way to augment. But here’s the key—it’s really powerful. [AI] will do some of those functions way faster than a software developer can. So if you’re not using it for those things, you’re going to start getting left behind.”

To put a finer point on it, Dorval described how Cisco has visibility to 500 security events a day. “The power of that is, you can put that into a model and your ability to anticipate new threats, to recommend configurations and make recommendations,” he said.

For those still struggling to lean into AI, take solace that as it grows, people management skills will become even more important. “I think in terms of leadership skills, it’s going to highlight the desperate need for that kind of human management, and then also really knowing your industry,” said Peterson.

While it’s important to experiment now, Amazon Web Ser-



VIEW HONOREES

## Congratulations 2024 Diversity & Pride List Honorees!

The Cablefax team is thrilled to announce the honorees for this year’s Diversity & Pride List, recognizing the most influential multi-ethnic and LGBTQ+ executives in the industry along with our D&I Champion. New this year, we’ve interspersed Cablefax’s Work Culture Awards to highlight the innovative and attractive work environments alongside the dynamic individuals of our Diversity and Pride Lists. [Visit our site to view the digital issue and read the Q&As from the honorees.](#)

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vices’ *Steph Lone* predicted that in just a few years there will be better models and tooling for AI. “I think that that journey needs to continue to mature, and I think you’ll see that over the next three years,” said Lone, who serves as Global Leader, Solutions Architecture, Media, Entertainment, Games & Sports.

AI has been around for more than a decade, but there is a step change taking place in terms of what generative AI is allowing us to do—and it’s a natural step. “When we think about the proliferation of data over the past five to 10 years, it’s kind of blown up into a little bit of a behemoth that no one knew how to monetize,” said Peterson. “Like most technological shifts, they come when they need to. I feel like we’re at this point where it’s like we have this ridiculous amount of data that’s all over the world... A lot of our industry shifts I think are about what that next wave of data is and what we’re doing with the data that exists to drive different experience.”

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**DISNEY GETS NEW CHAIR, SETS NEW SUCCESSION TIMELINE**

**Morgan Stanley** Executive Chairman *James Gorman* has been named Chair of **Disney’s** board, effective Jan. 2. He’ll succeed *Mark Parker*, who is leaving the Disney board on that date after nine years of service. Gorman, who currently serves as Chair of the Disney board’s Succession Planning Committee, will step down from his role at Morgan Stanley at the end of this year. Speaking of succession, Gorman said in a statement that a critical priority of his is the appointment of a new CEO to follow in the footsteps of *Bob Iger* when his contract ends in Dec. 2026. He expects to name a successor in early 2026. He believes that prediction is in line with the progress the board is making in its search and will allow ample time for a successful transition.

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**WICT TOUCHSTONES LUNCHEON**

The **WICT Network’s** Women of the Year gave Monday’s luncheon crowd plenty to ponder. “While I have such respect for technology, and I’m always eager to learn more, it’s the human connection where I really thrive. It’s really where we all thrive. The people in this industry, the people in your organizations and the people in this room, they connect you to what’s important,” said Technology Woman of the Year honoree *Sandy Howe*, who is on the board of **ATX Networks** and **SQUAN**. She urged attendees to find someone in the room they want to know and introduce themselves before rushing back to the office. “You never know where that one simple hello can make a difference in your careers and life,” she said. That thread of human connection continued in Programmer Woman of the Year *Johnita Due’s* speech. “I’ve always known, ever since high school, that I’ve

wanted to give voice to others. Over the past 20 years though, I’ve learned that it’s not enough to be a voice for others, but we also need to empower people to use their own voices,” said *Due*, **CNN Worldwide’s** EVP, Integrity & Inclusion. She shared that she’s excited to recount the honor with her father, noted attorney and civil rights activist [John Dorsey Due, Jr](#), who will celebrate his 90th birthday tomorrow. Operator Women of the Year *Amy Blair*, **Liberty Global’s** SVP & Chief People Officer, closed her acceptance speech by thanking her mother, who passed away when Blair was just 13 years old but still infused in her the importance of equality. “Oct. 25, 1941—dash—July 1, 1979. Her dash was not long, but her impact was profound. And as I quoted at the beginning of this speech, what matters is how we live our life and how we spend our ‘dash,’” said Blair, referencing *Linda Ellis’* poem “The Dash.” “It’s not about how long we live. It’s about living with intention. And like Vice President *Harris* says, ‘When you know what you stand for, you know what to fight for.’ So let’s celebrate our differences. Let’s use our voices and let’s live our dash.” Monday’s celebration also honored three women to watch: *Julie Unruh*, **Charter Communications’** Head of Strategic Operations, Sales & Marketing; **AMC Networks** EVP, Streaming *Courtney Thomasma* and *Steph Lone*, Global Leader, Solutions Architecture, Media Entertainment Games & Sports for **Amazon Web Services**.

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**JUST RELEASED: CABLEFAX’S 2024 DIVERSITY ISSUE**

Diversity Week 2024 has arrived, and so has this year’s **Cablefax: The Magazine Diversity & Pride List**. Our annual spotlight of influential multi-ethnic executives and LGBTQ+ leaders who go above and beyond in the industry showcases the continuous effort to connect and enrich the lives of many. This year’s D&I Champion *Karen Greenfield* exemplifies the commitment to telling stories that represent all corners of the world. Authenticity is a key factor in what drives her in her role as **National Geographic’s** SVP, Content, Diversity & Inclusion, and it’s taken a team effort to instill that mantra. Greenfield and her team have created an internal cultural competency training program for Nat Geo, and they’re also getting ready to roll out the first Authentic Storytelling Guide this fall. “We cannot assume that everyone lines up at the same start line and will cross the finish line at the same time,” she says. “This is a journey. We hope to all learn together while allowing our consumers to see themselves in our content.” Also featured in the magazine is a look toward the future of AI technology and human innovation in addition to a litany of D&I champions, four work culture awards and our Chief People Officer of the Year honor. You can view the digital issue and read individual profiles

Cablefax Daily (ISSN 1069-6644) is published daily by Access Intelligence, LLC | [www.cablefax.com](http://www.cablefax.com) | 301.354.2101 | Editorial Director: Amy Maclean, 301.354.1760, [amaclean@accessintel.com](mailto:amaclean@accessintel.com) | VP/Group Publisher, Cablefax and Synopsis: Robbie Caploe, 917.974.0640, [rcaploe@accessintel.com](mailto:rcaploe@accessintel.com) | Managing Editor: Sara Winegardner, 301.354.1701, [swinegardner@accessintel.com](mailto:swinegardner@accessintel.com) | Associate Editor: Noah Ziegler, 301.354.1704, [nziegler@accessintel.com](mailto:nziegler@accessintel.com) | Director of Business Development, Cablefax: Ellen Kamhi, 917.626.5574, [ekamhi@accessintel.com](mailto:ekamhi@accessintel.com) | Production Manager: Joann Fato, [jfato@accessintel.com](mailto:jfato@accessintel.com) | Kerry Smith, Divisional President, Marketing & Media Group, [ksmith@accessintel.com](mailto:ksmith@accessintel.com) | Group Subs/Subscription Questions, Client Services: 301.354.2101, [clientservices@accessintel.com](mailto:clientservices@accessintel.com) | Annual subscription price: \$1,999.00/year | Access Intelligence, LLC, 9211 Corporate Blvd., 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850

at [CablefaxDiversity.com](https://www.cablefaxdiversity.com), and we're excited to celebrate all of the 2024 honorees Tuesday night during **NAMIC's** reception.

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## ANOTHER FRONTIER SHAREHOLDER VOTES AGAINST VERIZON BUY

Another major **Frontier** shareholder is planning to vote against the company's sale to **Verizon** based on the current proposal to acquire Frontier at \$38.50/share. **Carronade Capital Management**, an investment manager with approximately \$2 billion in assets under management, sent a letter to other shareholders arguing that the price point is simply too low compared to the intrinsic value of the company. "Based on our decades of investment experience and extensive research, we believe that Frontier has an intrinsic value of at least \$48.60 per share on a standalone basis—and that is before a fair share of the unique synergy value this transaction brings to Verizon," Carronade said in the letter. It believes that based on other transactions like **T-Mobile's** buys of **Metronet** and **Lumos** and **Shentel's** purchase of **Horizon Telcom** support a price of at least \$48.60/share before any synergies are considered.

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## DIVERSITY WEEK NOTEBOOK

**WICT Network** CEO *Maria Brennan* and Global Board Chair *Leigh Woisard* kicked off Monday's WICT Signature Luncheon with a not-so-subtle take on why DEI is important to business. "If your company values enhanced financial performance, you are a fan of DEI," said Woisard, with Brennan interjecting, "According to **McKinsey & Company**." The routine continued with Woisard noting that companies who care about increased innovation and creativity are fans of DEI, and Brennan cited **Boston Consulting Group**. The two continued back and forth, ending with Woisard declaring that "If you want your people to feel respected and valued, then you're a fan of DEI" and Brennan chimed in with "And that's **Accenture**." – Harvard Kennedy School Senior Researcher *Siri Chilazi* focuses on data-driven insights and advancing gender equality through research, and she's co-authored a book releasing in January called "Make Work Fair: Data-Driven Design for Real Results." Her argument is that although many companies and organizations are now instituting different DEI programs, they are not focusing on which initiatives will truly move the needle. "We're just copying and pasting things that we see other people doing things that look good. Oh, now the hot thing of the day is to do diversity training, let's all of us do diversity training. Oh, now we need to start a new women's group," she said during an opening panel at the WICT Network Leadership Conference. "And again, those may work or may not, but it turns out there's a lot of evidence that we can bring to bear from the social sciences on what are the most effective practices, and we can dive into them a lot deeper. But I'll give you a hint, diversity training is not one of them." She said after numerous studies over the last 50-60 years, there's no evidence to suggest that uncon-

scious bias training and other related practices shift behavior. – Some cast members from **Bravo's** "The Real Housewives of New York" also showed up at the WICT Network Leadership Conference to share their insights. *Erin Lichy*, who is a luxury real estate agent, said her business philosophy is ultimately to not be afraid to fail and to be fiercely committed to making your dreams come to life. "We all have that fire in us, and sometimes it's hard as a woman because there are a lot more obstacles at times," she said during a morning session. "But you just keep that steadfast mentality of getting what I came here to get and I am not going to stop telling you exactly what I want. If that's in you, you figure out a way to get there."

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## SHULTZ TO LEAVE PARAMOUNT

*Jeff Shultz*, **Paramount's** Chief Strategy Officer and Chief Business Development Officer, Streaming, announced he will depart the company at the end of the year. "Those who know me well know this was never just a job. To my many business partners, I am so grateful for the critical role you played in the growth of **Pluto TV** and **Paramount+**. I will see you soon," he [wrote](#) in a LinkedIn post. Shultz's duties will be shifted to the purview of *Ray Hopkins*, the company's President, U.S. Network Distribution. Shultz joined Paramount following its acquisition of Pluto TV in 2019. He was an advisor for Pluto TV from 2014-17 before joining the free streaming platform as Chief Business Officer in 2017. Over the years, he helped broker deals that saw entities like the **NFL**, **MLB**, **Warner Bros. Discovery** and more to put content on FAST platforms.

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## FCC SIGNS MOUS WITH MORE STATES ON DATA PRIVACY

The **FCC's** Privacy and Data Protection Task Force and Enforcement Bureau have struck Memorandums of Understanding with five additional state attorneys general tied to privacy, data protection and cybersecurity enforcement matters. The agency will work with the attorneys general of Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Delaware and Indiana under these new deals, and the Commission has previously announced similar arrangements with Connecticut, Illinois, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and D.C. The deals ensure the state and federal officers will share common legal interests and work cooperatively to investigate and take enforcement action when it comes to issues of privacy and cybersecurity.

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## CHICK-FIL-A REVEALS DETAILS FOR UPCOMING STREAMER

Even fast food chains are getting in on the streaming service train these days. On Nov. 18, Chick-fil-A will launch a new free app called **Chick-fil-A Play** that'll come with original animated programming, podcasts, games, e-books and other programming. The restaurant is dubbing the app as a family-friendly "digital playground" for parents and kids to use. We'll see if it's accessible on Sundays!