

OPINION [Diversity & Inclusion](#)

Three principles for inclusive leadership

I will outline three leadership principles and associated tactics that increase diverse representation, expand equity and enhance inclusion.

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I believe that success is found at the intersection of effort and opportunity. When I consider my personal journey, discipline and work ethic have been essential contributors to my career progression. It is commonplace to emphasize effort in western culture which prizes ideals of individualism, entrepreneurship and self-made success. However, there is another necessary enabler which is access to opportunity. I readily acknowledge the support of colleagues and the serendipity of grace and timing as contributing factors to my success. I have, however, come to appreciate that while opportunity abounds, it is neither readily nor equitably accessible. This is a practical reality within the asset management industry. However, I have also come to appreciate that as an industry leader, I have an affirmative responsibility to not only ensure that opportunity is equitably accessible, but to lead in an inclusive manner.

The asset management industry offers tremendous career opportunities for enterprising individuals. It has engaged my intellectual curiosity, innovative capacity and sense of mission as I help individuals and institutions achieve their most important goals. Yet our industry has fallen woefully short of a pervasive and persistent commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Consider that while the U.S. population approximates gender parity, women account for 42 percent of the asset management industry and only 26 percent of executive management. The results are even less favorable with respect to ethnic diversity. Consider that Blacks and Hispanics account for approximately 32 percent of the U.S. population, yet less than 13 percent of industry representation and less than 5 percent of executive leadership. While I am reluctant to label my leadership actions as best practices, I will outline three leadership principles and associated tactics that increase diverse representation, expand equity and enhance inclusion.

Belief drives behavior

I can attest, unequivocally, that there are many talented diverse individuals who can excel in the asset management industry provided the opportunity. I also can attest that diverse teams offer cultural benefits which include higher engagement, increased creativity and more adept problem solving. Stubbornly low levels of diverse representation are due in large part to a lack of belief in the true promise of diversity. **To increase diverse representation, leaders must change established talent management practices which requires conviction.** We must recruit from new or unfamiliar sources such as Women in ETFs, Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Association for Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting. We must also offer targeted professional development opportunities for women and ethnically diverse professionals. When the leader’s commitment is vocal and visible it is emulated throughout the culture.

Measure because it matters

Equity involves equal access to opportunities and career advancement. Producing more equitable outcomes is the result of intentionality as opposed to good intentions. This requires leaders to set clear goals and expectations with respect to equity and career advancement. It requires leaders to equip their organizations with resources such as unconscious bias training. It also requires leaders to make pay equity and career advancement for women and ethnic minorities clear priorities. **Leaders must measure results and report progress publicly to expand equity.** Measurements must be considered at the metadata level, by breaking out specific categories such as Black, Hispanic and Asian professionals and considering the intersection of race, gender and orientation.

Bring others along

In order to enhance inclusion, the best advice that I can give leaders is to **bring others along**. I believe in mentorship and allyship and the important role they play in enhancing inclusion. Leaders however have a seat at the proverbial decision-making table and significant advancements are made through sponsorship. Sponsorship is critical in two regards. Sponsors enable access to career opportunities. Sponsors also affect how inevitable mistakes are interpreted, either as career stumbling blocks or stepping stones. **Leaders who ensure that diverse professionals are not only invited into the room but ultimately are afforded a seat at the table demonstrate the highest form of inclusion.**

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