

Publicity Contacts: Adrienne Fontaine / 917-270-6375 / adrienne.fontaine@finnpartners.com
Sharon Farnell / 212-593-6337 / Sharon.Farnell@Finnpartners.com



Innovating for Diversity *Lessons from Top Companies Achieving Business Success through Inclusivity*

In their new book, *Innovating for Diversity: Lessons from Top Companies Achieving Business Success through Inclusivity* (Wiley; March 28, 2023), Bertina Ceccarelli and Susanne Tedrick share how—through the application of innovation principles—businesses can accelerate the hiring, retention and advancement of underrepresented talent, and ultimately, positively impact their bottom lines.

You'll be inspired by business leaders at top companies across a variety of industries who identified root causes of limited DEI progress

and created smart, bold solutions for increasing representation, developing future talent, and advancing the careers of people often overlooked.

NPower CEO Bertina Ceccarelli and technologist Susanne Tedrick work every day to break down barriers to social and economic mobility. In her role at NPower, a North American non-profit committed to helping young adults and veterans launch tech careers, Ceccarelli is on a mission to advance racial and gender equity in the tech industry and disrupt the status quo to build a more inclusive workplace.

In her groundbreaking and critically-acclaimed book, *Women of Color in Tech* (Wiley, 2020), Tedrick informs and inspires women of color of their limitless professional opportunities within the tech industry and offers strategies for advancing their tech careers despite well-documented obstacles. Tedrick is an outspoken advocate for greater diversity across the tech sector, a frequent speaker, writer, and host of Wiley's *Diversity in Tech* webinar series.

The authors write, "Great leaders don't settle for 'good enough' when it comes to identifying and training diverse talent. They push their teams to question what's possible and to innovate scalable solutions."

In *Innovating for Diversity*, you'll find case studies from Fortune 100 companies and small businesses that took courageous action, as well as candid commentary from C-suite leaders about their biggest fails, unexpected wins, and the grit and commitment needed to implement systems change. You'll also learn:

- The most common traps that cause corporate DEI programs to fail
- The business case for diversity, as well as the moral and ethical imperative
- How to disrupt the Fixed Practices and Fixed Attitudes that get in the way of change
- Introductions to the people and companies who have innovated their approaches to diverse hiring, retention, and advancement and enjoyed pronounced impact on their bottom lines
- How Citi and Accenture successfully used the apprenticeship model to foster tech talent from diverse backgrounds
- Profiles of committed leaders driving the change towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce
- How Coca-Cola and Zendesk get mentorship right
- How Target and Quartz succeed in retaining diverse talent through innovative approaches
- How the National Hockey League (NHL) and World Wide Technology (WWT) take a comprehensive, long-term approach to building systems that bolster inclusive cultures and build greater value for *all* stakeholders
- Rewards for breaking down stubborn cultural and organizational barriers in companies that prevent transformative change

A critical resource for senior-level business professionals, managers, and executives, *Innovating for Diversity* will also prove to be invaluable for people seeking to build their careers from the ground up.

For more information, visit <https://innovatingfordiversity.com/>.

Innovating for Diversity:
Lessons from Top Companies Achieving Business Success through Inclusivity
Wiley; March 28, 2023; Hardcover; 978-1119909897

About the Authors

Bertina Ceccarelli is the Chief Executive Officer of NPower, one of the largest non-profits in North America committed to helping young adults and military-connected individuals launch tech careers. Under her leadership NPower has grown its budget five-fold in the last six years and today serves over 2,000 individuals annually.

Bertina embraced the mission of NPower after a long career in the corporate sector and with a deeply personal set of motivations. Because she grew up in a working-class family and was the first to graduate from high school, getting a college degree was not a forgone conclusion. It was only through the counseling of adults who took the time to care that she was set on a very different path, earning a B.S. in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research at U.C. Berkeley and an MBA from Harvard Business School. It brings her joy to help others connect with their pathways and to inspire a new generation of leaders to operate at the intersection of good business and better humanity.

Bertina's commitment to helping others break social and economic mobility barriers has led to her involvement in strategic alliance organizations, including Founding member of TechPACT; member, CEO Action; steering committee member, America's Promise; Wall Street Journal CEO Council; as well as membership on the Forbes Council, NationSwell, and Concordia communities. She was named as one of the Tech Industry's Brightest Superstars by *US Black Engineer*. She is an engaging storyteller and speaks frequently at industry events and conferences.

Susanne Tedrick is a writer and speaker who is dedicated to expanding the professional opportunities of women and people of color within the tech industry. She is the author of the critically acclaimed book, *Women of Color in Tech, A Blueprint for Inspiring and Mentoring the Next Generation of Technology Innovators*, and has previously been featured in many influential tech and business media outlets including Worth Magazine, CompTIA, PECB Insights and CIO.com. She currently serves as a coalition member of NPower's Command Shift initiative, aimed at increasing the participation of women of color in tech, and formerly served as the chair of CompTIA's Advancing Tech Talent and Diversity Executive Council.

Susanne was the recipient of CompTIA's inaugural Diversity in Technology Leadership award in 2020. She holds a BPhilCom in Communication Systems from Northwestern University and is a current Executive MBA candidate at New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business. She currently works as technical trainer focused on cloud computing and resides in New York City.

Praise for *Innovating for Diversity*

"DEI is top of mind for virtually all executives regardless of the sector that they are leading in. This book highlights the key principles that are critical to success in any change effort: courage, leadership, collaboration, and trust. With compelling and detailed case studies, readers will learn how to put these principles into action." - **Jane Wei-Skillern, Senior Fellow, Center for Social Sector Leadership, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business**

"The ultimate reward for truly innovating to form more diverse teams is a culture of belonging, which is absolutely necessary for any company that wants dazzling performance. I've been excited and inspired by the case studies that show how great leaders are shifting from just a compliance view of DE&I to building teams where everyone is motivated to be exponential." - **Earl Newsome, Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Cummins and Co-Founder, TechPACT**

"This book dispels the notion that innovation and diversity are incompatible. It shatters the long held belief that change must be slow. It demonstrates in tangible ways using present day examples how companies large and small can radically improve their diversity efforts and in so doing enhance the bottom line." - **Larry Quinlan, Board Director and Former Global Chief Information Officer, Deloitte**

"When it comes to DEI, saying the right thing is easier than doing the right thing. Through eye-opening stories and data, this book specifies the mindsets, metrics, and methods to realize growth pathways for people and businesses of all sizes. The authors provide perceptive questions to discern root causes of deleterious fixed practices and principles. Equally important, they illustrate the leadership behaviors plus organizational tools which create conditions for the maximum number of diverse people to flourish and collectively accelerate innovation." - **Roselinde Torres, Leadership Expert and TED Speaker**

"The authors of 'Innovating for Diversity' bring us inspiring examples of corporate leaders courageous enough to question established practices and make substantive changes in the way they recruit, hire, develop, and advance employees. In doing so, these innovators teach us a valuable lesson: Creating truly diverse, inclusive, and innovative workplaces is good for people—and good for business" - **Maria Flynn, President and CEO, Jobs for the Future**

"Meaningful diversity and equity practices are essential to the success of any organization, and I can think of no better guides through this complex process than Bertina and Susanne. 'Innovating For Diversity' should be on the bookshelf of every manager and business leader in this country. The case studies are unique and illuminating, the advice is practical and adaptable, and readers will no doubt walk away inspired and committed to create work cultures grounded in inclusion." - **Dr. Tarika Barrett, CEO, Girls Who Code**

Suggested Interview Questions


1. With so many companies acknowledging that good DEI practices advance the bottom line—and are important legally and morally—why do we still see glaring gaps in representation in high-growth sectors of our economy?
2. What are the barriers that impede innovation, especially those connected to diversity?
3. What are the five cultural characteristics necessary for innovation?
4. Why do organizational DEI efforts often flounder or fail?
5. What is the apprenticeship model for developing diverse talent and what are some of the keys to this particular model's success?
6. Why do so many organizations fail at having thriving mentorship programs?
7. What kind of additional challenges do small businesses face when it comes to implementing DEI?
8. What are the top 3 reasons employees leave their places of employment? Why should this be a concern when diversity and inclusion are priorities?
9. How can organizations help propel diverse, mid-career talent and improve overall retention?
10. You write, "If it's not measured, it doesn't matter." What does this mean in terms of DEI initiatives?

Lessons in Innovating for Diversity

(adapted excerpt)

In our research and through our conversations with leaders at several forward-thinking organizations, we discovered several common themes across their approaches to innovate for diversity. Chief among them:

- **Visible senior leadership support is necessary but not sufficient for making diversity an actionable priority.** Public proclamations that announce ambitious goals for a more diverse and inclusive workplace need support with clear plans that are operationalized at every level for success to take root.
- **DEI must be an integral part of organizational culture where supporting behaviors and expectations are codified.** The actions, and behaviors of individual leaders to advance diversity within their teams must be visible and evaluated. Reinforcing behaviors should be celebrated and deleterious actions addressed with clear feedback and course corrections. When considered integral to a company's culture, DEI also then becomes a part of the company's DNA in a way that survives personnel changes or shifts in day-to-day business priorities.
- **Measurement matters.** Important key performance indicators and metrics should be identified at the start of implementing any program or initiative. Establishing baseline quantitative and qualitative data, together with regular progress checks, allows organizations to quickly identify areas for further review and improvement.
- **Accountability is required.** Once measures and goals are established by leaders, organizations certainly should celebrate success. Acknowledgement of failures and struggles, and taking responsibility in improving outcomes, is a sign of a healthy culture and, for the goal of DEI gains, a requirement.
- **DEI work isn't the domain of just one leader or one department.** Companies successful in their DEI practices encourage collaboration across several departments or business units, and among those of varying levels of responsibility and tenure. They are also humble enough to acknowledge where they lack knowledge and expertise.
- **It's okay to start small.** Pilots and experimentation are central to any innovation. If successful, a pilot program can spark other new ideas and improvements and elicit discussion on how to scale the program to other parts of an organization.

- 
- ***Know when and how to tackle underlying systems limiting DEI progress.*** Starting small and systemically tackling components of HR or business practices through innovative pilots can often reveal Fixed Practices and Fixed Attitudes that are so entrenched they are practically invisible. Only when those fixed qualities are addressed by stakeholders as root problems can DEI programs scale and thrive.
 - ***Steadfast commitment.*** For DEI programs to be meaningful and sustainable, they must transcend specific events and be anchored in both clearly understood goals and woven into culture. Senior leaders and their teams must commit to DEI *every day and over the long-term.*
 - ***Strong leadership matters.*** Successful DEI practices fueled by innovation focus on the individual, understand employees' unique skills and interests, create a culture and environment that supports success, leverages passionate and determined leaders who are energized by unlocking potential in others.
 - ***Diversity and inclusion efforts, without attention to equity, may ring hollow.*** To retain advance diverse talent, they will need tangible tools, resources, and support from leaders in their career journey. While this can include mentoring, strong sponsorship, autonomy over how they perform their work and comprehensive career development approaches are key.
 - ***DEI is an imperfect journey, not a destination or checklist.*** Just as few successful businesses adopt a simple checklist approach to improving sales or scaling operations, those who achieve strong DEI outcomes have a clear understanding of the core problem they seek to address and tailor their solutions accordingly. Furthermore, understanding the relentless focus DEI requires prevents the threats to innovation from hindering the emergence of new ideas and sustained progress.