

**In recognition of Diversity Month, the Broward County Diversity Advisory Council facilitates roundtable discussion, featuring panel of distinguished professionals.**

This meeting was a special roundtable event planned by the Broward County Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) which was held on January 16, 2007 at the Broward County Main Library in the eighth floor conference rooms.

Guest Participants from left to right: Sam Mathis, Vice President and Chief



Diversity Officer for the North Broward Hospital District; Clint Adams, a DHL Corporate Recruiter and DHL Ambassador for Diversity; Christina Fischer, President of The Fischer Group; Susan E. Zatorski, Director of Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer for Citigroup Latin America; and DAC Chairperson Anitra Lanczi

In addition to members of the Council, the general public in attendance kept the conversation active and lively.

Christina Fischer assisted in moderating the program. She prepared a PowerPoint presentation which we handed out in black and white print-outs. The speakers initiated general discussion by introduction and presented briefly experiences in diversity a few concepts being practice within their organizations.



Ms. Fischer started out the roundtable by discussing the importance of commitment to the diversity initiative at the top of the organization. It became apparent throughout the discussion that all of the panelists agreed that this was absolutely critical to the success of a genuine diversity program. DHL

representative Clint Adams mentioned that at times managers may resist this diversity initiative because they feel that by speaking up on that subject, they would be criticized. When there is leadership from the top an environment is created in which it is safe to support diversity initiatives.

In fact, compensation programs are currently structured in many organizations to reward compliance with diversity initiatives and goals. By encouraging supportive diversity initiatives and goals and through an understanding of the value to the organization, DHL has changed its culture so that managers now come to the diversity director for assistance in hiring, managing, training and promoting a diverse workforce.



There was discussion of the value of diversity to business organizations. Christina Fischer shared the story of Avon Products, which had an all-male board of directors and was verging on bankruptcy. They came to understand that their marketing plans were not fully addressing the people buying their products - women. They changed their board

of directors; the Chairman of the Board is now an Asian woman and the company has been able to return to profitability. The story demonstrates that it is important for companies to know what their market is and to reflect that market. She also shared the story of a Hispanic construction company that had been marketing itself as an anglo company with lots of photographs of pick-up trucks and burly white construction workers. The company was facing financial difficulties and she re-focused their marketing efforts to the Hispanic audience in Miami-Dade, where the company was based. The result was a return to profitability for that company as well.

Sam Mathis explained the importance of diversity management as being at the heart of the diversity initiative. He noted that it is essential for organizations to recognize the demographics of the communities they are in and to adjust their business models to those demographic realities.



Susan Zatorski discussed the difficulties of communicating what diversity means to her Latin American companies, and the challenges she faces in diversity compliance with Citigroup's 1,000 employees in South Florida. She explained that Citigroup has an affirmative action officer in New York whose entire job is to review the affirmative action plans of various Citigroup offices throughout the world. Citigroup does regular reviews of its diversity goals and measures compliance against those goals on a regular basis.



Mr. Mathis especially emphasized the importance of regularly measuring where the organization stands in its diversity initiative across a variety of success criteria. These reviews are a central element of any good

diversity plan, according to all of our speakers.

One example was given by Citigroup. It was determined that Citigroup would offer flex-time schedules to its employees and that these would be offered without requiring any explanation from the employee as to the purpose behind the flex-time request. Flex time is usually assumed to be of most interest to women so that they can adjust their work schedules to take care of their families. When Citigroup analyzed the actual usage of flex time they found that its diverse communities of employees had different needs with respect to flexibility and working hours. These might be needed by women for taking care of family members or by religious groups in order to meet their religious obligations.



Citigroup did not believe that it was proper to require employees to explain that their religion required that they be home by a certain hour or that certain hours be set aside for prayer. This is a matter to be left up to the individual. By not requiring an explanation for a request for flex time they were surprised to find that a larger number of men than women employees requested flex-time schedules.

The preceding narrative illustrates just a few of the issues raised and topics discussed by the guest participants. Following the discussion was a brief question and answer period after which the Chair thanked the guest participants, members of the Council and the attending public for their participation.

As the roundtable was not a formal Council meeting but a special event, member attendance was optional. The program was well attended, successful; we look forward to next year's event.

