

OUT & EQUAL

WORKPLACE ADVOCATES

An Intimate Conversation with Women of Color leading LGBTQ Strategies Takeaways

Moderator

Deneen L. Garrett, Lead Consultant-Diversity, AT&T (Black, Corporate Strategy)

LinkedIn link

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/deneenlgarrett/>

Company website

<https://www.att.com/>

LGBT resources

<http://about.att.com/sites/diversity>

<http://league-att.org/>



Presenters:

Cindy Cordoba-Kozziel, Global Diversity Initiatives Manager, GM (Latina who leads the LGBT and Native American portfolio for GM. I am also an active duty military mom with high interest in Veterans initiatives)

LinkedIn link

Not available

Company website

www.gm.com

www.gm.com/company/diversity/featured-diversity

LGBT resources

NGLCC- www.nglcc.org

PFLAG- www.PFLAG.org

AFFIRMATIONS- www.goaffirmations.org

oSTEM- <https://www.ostem.org/>

HRC- www.hrc.org

Out&Equal- www.outandequal.org

Katherine "Kathy" Martinez, Walmart, Director of Labor Relations & Field Strategy-Pride ARG (Hispanic/Latina, LGBT)

LinkedIn link

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/katherinemartinez/>

Company website

<https://www.walmart.com/>

<https://corporate.walmart.com/> our corporate site

LGBT resources

Our PRIDE site is an internal site only



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Kimberly D. King-Engineering Program Manager and TI Pride Chair, Texas Instruments
(Black, LGBT)

LinkedIn link

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/kimberly-king-51797a4/>

Company website

<http://www.ti.com/>

LGBT resources

[TI Diversity Network](#) internal only



Blaine A. Kebede, Staff Advisory Services, EY, #1 on Diversity Inc.'s Top 50 list (Black, LGBTQ)

LinkedIn link

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/blainekebede/>

Company website

<http://www.ey.com/>

LGBT resources

<http://www.ey.com/us/en/about-us/our-people-and-culture/diversity-and-inclusiveness/diversity-and-inclusiveness>

<http://herphillymoves.com/>

<https://www.galaei.org/>

<http://www.leeway.org/>

<https://www.creatingchange.org/>



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Q&A

I Q&A-Part I

Cindy

Not available

- ✚ Please tell us more about your role at GM as a D&I professional.
- ✚ What led you to your current role?
- ✚ GM has had an employee group “campaigning equal treatment and safe, accepting working conditions for all GM employees” since 1993. Today that group is known as GM PLUS. Please share how you’re involved with this employee group, some of their major accomplishments. And other GM LGBT initiatives?
- ✚ What is the “why” behind these programs?

II Q&A-Part II

Kathy

- ✚ Please tell us more about your role at Walmart as a HR professional and as an ARG leader.

I serve as the Labor Relations Director for the state of Florida and Puerto Rico (425 retail units & 121,874 associates). In my role, I am responsible for the readiness of leaders when responding and handling labor issues. I am also responsible for responding to escalated labor issues that our facilities may face. I direct strategies to develop and execute short-term and long-term associate relations plans. For the past year I have been serving as part of the leadership team for Walmart’s PRIDE Associate Resource Group. My main role in PRIDE is to lead our strategy for how we engage U.S. associates, particularly those in the field. This directly reaches 1.5 million field and store associates.

- ✚ What are some of Walmart’s LGBT initiatives?

I would like to take a moment and first talk about some of what we have accomplished in the last few years. In 2013 we announced benefits for associate’s domestic partners. In 2016 we added transgender care benefits to our associate’s health plan. In the same year we had our first LGBT couple appear in a national Walmart television commercial. Earlier this year we were honored by being added to HRC’s (Human Rights Campaign) list of best places to work after we earned a perfect score of 100 on the annual Corporate Equality Index. As part of our ongoing strategy, the focus for this year has been to educate our field leaders on LGBTQ issues and experiences. One of our company’s value is “Respect for the Individual.” Part of our goal by increasing the focus on the field this year is to ensure we are educating associates and allies, especially those with leadership roles – on how to foster an inclusive environment where each associate can bring their whole self to work every day. We are also focused on growing our community relations by

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empowering our local stores to support community initiatives that are important to our associates and customers, within those communities they serve. We help LGBT associates network with senior leaders across the company, and each other. We also counsel the business and develop programs for associates. This week, our U.S. President and CEO is hosting an event on National Coming Out Day that will be broadcast to associates across the country. During this event we will be explaining how being an LGBT inclusive workplace is helping Walmart win in this dynamic period for retail.

✚ How has being “out” impacted either?

I might not have mentioned this previously, but in my role, I have the opportunity to interact with so many Walmart associates in our facilities each week.

I am encouraged to bring my whole self to work every day because not only do I feel supported but I am encouraged to extend that to others.

I come across leaders who are not comfortable, usually because they lack knowledge, on how to interact with their LGBT associates and peers. That is the perfect opportunity for me to connect them with our PRIDE group and share resources.

The other has been when I have had the opportunity to serve as a model for LGBT associates who may not be aware that they are embraced at Walmart.

In both cases these regular interactions, having the opportunity to educate, to be an example or simply inspire someone to be their true self, has made a huge impact in my life.

III Q&A-Part III

Blaine

✚ Please talk to us about your experience as a LGBT woman of color. Are you able to differentiate between the two? Which has impacted you the most?

My experience as a QWOC has been particularly challenging. For most of my life I was stuck in the closet-I didn't come out until about three years ago. Coming out is a difficult experience for everyone, no matter your background, but I found that coming out to a black family, to a traditional Ethiopian family, where there really is no language for “gay” or “queer” I had to hard time expressing my sexuality and I think even now, because it's something so unordinary to my family, they still struggle to understand it. That's when I really started to seek support and comfort in the queer community, which led to my involvement in Her Philly Moves. Being an LGBTQ woman of color involves acknowledging that one exists at the

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intersection of several identities and consistently resisting oppressive systems that restrict our abilities to exist freely and authentically

For a long time I rejected my sexuality and internalized my feelings because I didn't think it was possible. I didn't think I could exist as a young, queer, black woman, pursuing a career in financial services. Mainly because there was no representation of that demographic around me. And while all these aspects of my identity have impacted me equally in different ways, after coming out and truly accepting myself for who I am I can't differentiate those facets of my identity. I am Blaine - I am black, I am queer, I am Ethiopian, I am a woman, and I am a professional. And it's so important to recognize the intersectionality of those things as opposed to envisioning them as being mutually exclusive.

Kim

✚ What has been your greatest challenge as a LGBT WoC?
My biggest challenge leading the TI Pride ERG has been the ability to get more POC LGBT employees to participate in the initiative. For the most part our active LGBT community; is white.

✚ What has been your proudest moment as a LGBT WOC?
My proudest moment was while on my family vacation in Mexico June 23rd I heard that Supreme Court had legalized marriage equality.

Blaine

✚ What is the #1 factor that you attribute to EY's success as a top company for diversity?

So I've thought about this a lot because it's really hard to drill it down to just one factor. I think there's a lot that goes into creating a culture that cares about diversity. For EY, as a financial services firm we don't have assets-our only asset is our people. We are in the business of making relationships, building trust, and providing services. So from that stance, I think at EY's core, leadership really understands the value of diversity not only in people but in thought. They understand that it's a value add to the team, to the client, and to the overall working world. But it's not just diversity that makes EY special, because diversity cannot sustain without inclusion. It's deeper than just recruiting minorities and having the numbers, it's about making people feel they have a safe space to share their voice. This is why EY succeeds. Examples of how EY does this is through high performing team exercises where teams (prior to doing any engagement work) will take the time to perform activities that build trust and embrace healthy conflict. This looks getting to know each other backgrounds and differences

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through unconscious bias frameworks and trainings. EY succeeds through its differential investment in minorities and focusing of equity instead of equality. Understanding and embracing the differences while at the same time creating a level playing field for everyone. **

Kim

- What LGBT program/initiative(s) at TI have benefitted you the most?
The ability to be the TI Pride Chair has given me visibility to our top Leadership team; which has increased my value as a Tler and provided me opportunities that I may have not received if I stayed behind the scenes.

IV Closing-Part I-All

Cindy

Not available

- Final thoughts as a D&I professional with responsibility for LGBT strategy at GM?

Kathy

- One recommendations for WoC who are having a hard time?
In my personal experience, we are pretty hard on ourselves, especially as it relates to being accepted by others. This creates fears within us and often fears can grow when we are discouraged from having dialogue about those concerns. We are living in a time where others are more receptive to LGBT individuals, REALLY! Assess the risks of coming out at work based on your interactions with others and based on your company's anti-discrimination policies. Is it inclusive of gender identity and gender expression? Are there functioning resource groups? If so, it may be a good idea to start with those you are closest with and go from there. Remember if you are not in a supportive and inclusive workplace, you don't have to come out to everyone, straight people don't! But if you are, just think of how much better you will feel bringing your authentic self to work every day!

Kim

- What 1 thing do you want to leave today's audience with?
Stay involved in the community and don't become complacent because the strides we have made from an African American Lesbian point of view could all change with our current administration. We have come so far but we is still have work to do.

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Blaine



What encouragement do you have for LGBT WoC?

My advice for QWOC is don't give up. Continue to be fearless, continue to be true to you. You are not alone. I urge you all to find your tribe, find your support circle. This can be a mentor or sponsor at work or personal - anyone you can relate to. It's not easy, but it is easier when you're not alone. If you can't find someone in real life, seek the internet. The internet can be a powerful and supportive resource to build a community. Her Philly Moves began as a blog for queer women of color to find events and resources catered exclusively to them and we have grown to establish a real-life presence. There are several more resources out on the internet and in real life and please feel free to contact me if you ever need helping finding any.