



BSR Conference 2009

**Reset Economy. Reset World.**

## Diversity and Inclusion

Breakout Session Summary

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 | 11 a.m.-noon

### Speakers

- » **Dolores Bernardo**, Global Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Google
- » **Tom Johnson**, Vice President and Corporate Controller, The Clorox Company
- » **Cody Sisco**, Manager, Advisory Services, BSR (moderator)

### Highlights

- » A diverse workforce is an essential element in helping companies understand and meet the needs of a diverse customer base.
- » Some of the benefits of an inclusive workplace include increased individual productivity when employees are able to bring their “whole self” to work; improved team productivity through leaders who can speak honestly to inspire trust; and improved business results, especially when diverse groups are leveraged for successful product development.
- » The workplace can drive change in the wider world by educating employees about diversity issues so they can share this information with their families and communities.

### Memorable Quotes

*“[Google came out publicly against California’s Proposition 8, which restricts the definition of marriage to heterosexual couples] purely for our employees to know that we’re standing by them and we support them. It doesn’t have much to do with Google’s business, but it’s Google’s imperative to say something, because it affects Google employees.”* —Dolores Bernardo, Google

*“It’s not enough to have the grassroots ... it’s not enough to have a strategy or a policy. We need leaders who are walking the walk. Diverse leadership is a good start. Their actions speak louder than words, and they set the example for people in the entire organization.”* —Tom Johnson, The Clorox Company

### Overview

Sisco started the session by describing the importance of diversity in building strong companies. Sisco then introduced Tom Johnson, who shared his experience of coming out as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (GLBT) employee at Clorox.

Johnson said that although he was working hard when he began at Clorox, he wasn’t doing his best work. “The ‘closet’ is an apt metaphor,” he explained. “It’s not the best place to work.” Johnson described three defining times that characterized his and the company’s journey toward inclusivity. The first came when Clorox asked Johnson to relocate to London and Johnson thought the company didn’t have a policy in place for partner relocations. But Clorox put together a package for Johnson and his partner. The second defining moment happened when Johnson helped Clorox formalize policies to address partner relocation and other common LGBT issues as a demonstration of the company’s commitment to diversity. The third time came when Johnson saw company leadership demonstrate a true understanding of and value for diversity through public commitments and gestures.

Bernardo then talked about how diversity fit into Google’s mission to make information accessible and useful for everyone. She noted that the Google workforce must reflect the diversity of the



world for which it creates products. She cited Google's 40 Language Project and its Accessibility Project as signature efforts to make information accessible to a diverse user base. In the first example, Googlers are asked to translate jargon and make Google products user-friendly and approachable in all of their 40 languages. In the second, testing environments that simulate low-vision or low-dexterity user experiences allow engineers to understand accessibility issues.

Bernardo went on to discuss how the lack of women with higher degrees in computer science has affected Google's ability to hire women. To remedy this, Google has created scholarships for women and girls in computer science. She also discussed mentoring programs and extended maternity and other parental leave initiatives as effective in helping retain women. She noted that Google places particular importance on parent-focused programs because many of the company's employees are in their 30s and have children.

Both panelists discussed affinity programs and groups that support diversity and inclusion within their organizations.

During the question-and-answer period, a participant asked how each speaker's company demonstrated progress. Bernardo described Google's diversity dashboard, which includes metrics on hiring, retention, and advancement. Johnson noted that functional leaders in Clorox are measured against diversity targets on an annual basis, and that targets only "go in one direction—up."

A second participant asked how diversity fits into supply chain requirements. Johnson responded that Clorox's supplier diversity program also has targets. He noted that, similar to a diverse workforce, "great ideas can come from a diverse supplier base."

Another participant pointed out that some companies view external recognition for diversity efforts as important, though many of these programs require companies to disclose a large amount of data in order to qualify. She asked how the speakers' companies strike a balance between seeking a diversity ranking and doing the right thing for their organization. Bernardo said Google decides which external organizations to submit to on a case-by-case basis, with support from diversity resources groups that give input on which external recognition is important. Johnson echoed that response and added that the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index is becoming a leading indicator of a company's inclusivity.

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