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Winter 2016

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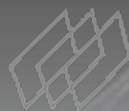
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JEREMIAH A. DEBERRY
DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION - US, MAYER BROWN LLP

MAYER BROWN SERVING AS CHANGE AGENT IN LEGAL SECTOR

As a leading international law firm with more than 1,500 lawyers in 22 offices world-wide, Mayer Brown LLP, is committed to enhancing diversity in the legal profession.

Under the leadership of US Director of Diversity and Inclusion Jerry DeBerry, the firm is on track in its efforts to recruit, hire, develop and promote diverse lawyers. “We have made changing the culture of the firm our ultimate goal,” DeBerry said.

A trailblazer in the industry, DeBerry has spent the past 18 years as an active proponent of diversity in the legal sector. He says the role of diversity leader continues to evolve and change. “Over the years, I have witnessed a shift in focus from recruiting, to development and retention, to, most recently, business development and promotion,” he said. With those broad categories, he serves in a variety of functions at the firm, including recruiter, counselor, mentor, career coach, business developer, thought leader and change agent. “The most important is change agent,” he said.



The success of diversity and inclusion efforts in the legal field will increasingly be measured not only by the number of diverse lawyers, but also by the quality of experience and professional development of lawyers. Working toward that end, DeBerry said key issues Mayer Brown is focusing on include unconscious bias, micro-inequities and social isolation. “The key is understanding the concepts, because they are more than theoretical for those who experience their impact on a daily basis. They have a profound effect on professional confidence, performance and career trajectory,” DeBerry said.

BUSINESS IMPERATIVE DIVERSE LEGAL TEAMS

Improving diversity and inclusion has become a business imperative for law firms, as an increasing number of corporate clients are demanding that law firms staff their matters with diverse legal teams. “These clients aren’t just requiring that diverse lawyers be staffed on their matters, they are also demanding that diverse lawyers hold leadership positions on such matters,” DeBerry said.

As a result, he said his responsibilities as diversity leader have expanded to include significant client interaction. This usually involves meetings with clients to discuss the firm’s overall diversity and inclusion goals and its strategies to increase the diversity of the teams that are handling clients’ matters.

“Due to the increased client focus on diversity and inclusion efforts at their outside counsel law firms, diversity and inclusion initiatives will become an important component of all firms’ overall strategic plans,” he said.

ENGAGING AT THE TOP

Engaging senior leaders of the firm and enabling them to make meaningful contributions to the firm’s diversity and inclusion initiatives is critically important. “The more involved leaders are in the effort, the greater the chance for long-term success and institutional change,” DeBerry said.

Sharing an example, he demonstrates how Mayer Brown is making progress in this area through his participation in the firm’s high-level partner promotion process. “This is a significant step that ensures diversity and inclusion principles are incorporated into the decision-making process when promoting lawyers to partner in the firm,” he said.

In 2015, 75 percent of the associates promoted to partner in the firm’s New York office were diverse and 75 percent were women. “It’s a testament to the sincerity of our commitment to improving diversity and inclusion,” he added. **PDJ**

PHILOSOPHY:
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AND INCLUSIVE
ENVIRONMENT IN
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HAS AN EQUAL
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SUCCEED AND REACH
FULL POTENTIAL.

HIGHLIGHTS OF MAYER BROWN’S RECENT D&I RECOGNITION INCLUDE:

- *Profiles in Diversity Journal* - Innovation in Diversity Award
- Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index - Best Places To Work
- Metropolitan Black Bar Association - African-American group recognition
- Various recognitions for significant pro bono support and commitment to the community