

**A Newsletter From Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc.  
Helping Business Leaders Manage Their Careers and Their Resources**

## One-on-One

### Diversity: An Executive Perspective

Rosalind Brewer is President and Corporate Officer of Kimberly-Clark Corporation. She currently leads the Global Nonwovens sector, which includes research and development, engineering, and manufacturing. This sector operates 27 nonwoven base machines in North America, Mexico, Europe, and Asia, with a sales value of just over \$1 billion and 2,000 employees internationally.



In addition to her responsibilities at Kimberly-Clark, Rosalind is a member of the Executive Leadership Council and serves on the board of the Board of Directors Network and the Carter

Presidential Center. Rosalind is an active alumna and volunteer for Spelman College. In 2005, Rosalind was awarded the "Legacy of Leadership Award" from Spelman College, was voted one of "25 Power Women to Watch" by Atlanta Woman Magazine, and was granted the DIVA award by Atlanta Business-to-Business Magazine.

#### Conscious Communication:

In your role at Kimberly-Clark, what is your current pain?

#### Brewer:

We are currently at a corporate transformation. It involves developing our corporation for more growth and opportunity. We are going toward being more of a risk-taking organization and venturing into new categories and marketplaces that we've never entered before. From a leadership perspective, my current challenge is that it requires a lot from me to make sure my organization is ready for that change.

#### Conscious Communication:

You serve on the Kimberly-Clark Corporate Diversity Committee. Explain its role within the company.

#### Brewer:

The corporate diversity steering committee is an internal organization at the

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## Welcome to our Fall Edition!

"There never were in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity."

– Michel de Montaigne



What does diversity represent in the corporate landscape? It is age, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, upbringing, knowledge, experience, skill set, employees, customers, vendors, management, governance, and more. It is also Fortune's annual published "Diversity" list, Russell Simmons and LL Cool J ringing The Opening Bell <sup>SM</sup> at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), and, most recently, Michelle Wie turning pro in golf.

The results from the 2000 Census established that the ethnic makeup of the United States is changing at a rate faster than anyone anticipated. Corporations are making a business case for diversity by shaping their cultures to reflect an ever-changing nation.

Clearly, the definition, study, and management of diversity in corporate America are broad as well as challenging. Many organizations are measuring their success through their recruitment of minorities and women, retention, and supplier diversity initiatives. This quarter's newsletter will cover the management of diversity, from an executive/board room perspective to the mid-level manager or individual contributor to the individual in his or her personal life.

This issue's One-on-One features Rosalind Brewer, President and Corporate Officer at Kimberly-Clark Corporation. Rosalind shares information about her current role as well as insights on diversity as she sees it today and in the future. Next, Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, who is the nation's leading expert on diversity, shares tips for the individual contributor or mid-level manager to effectively manage their careers. Finally, Melanie Miller charts ways in which individuals can personally embrace more diversity in their day-to-day lives.

*Conscious Communication* is dedicated to providing valuable human capital management strategies and career tips to our clients, career seekers, and professional networks on a quarterly basis. You are invited to share this newsletter with your colleagues and friends. You are also invited to visit [www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com](http://www.edwardsconsultingfirm.com) to learn how you can benefit from our executive search and contract services. And, as always, we welcome your feedback and ideas for future issues of *Conscious Communication*.

Best regards,



Damali Edwards  
Founder and CEO

officer level that acts as a liaison between the employment body and the CEO. We oversee the diversity networks within the corporation, bring sensitivity of diversity issues to the CEO, and influence initiatives for the entire company. We literally put a diversity spin on everything that the corporation does.

## **Conscious Communication:**

Many organizations measure their success by numbers. How do you measure success at Kimberly-Clark?

## **Brewer:**

We use an inclusion index tool that measures engagement. We, too, used to only look at numbers but realized that we had retention and other management issues. Driving change in a large organization is challenging, and it is important to look at the culture as a whole. Employees are asked a series of questions around their involvement with the organization, asking whether they feel valued or not and what type of changes they would like to see. This measuring tool pushes us to ask better questions than, for example, "Do we need to hire more women in our sales department?" We are now equipped to ask, "Is this environment right for people to thrive? Can minorities realize their career dreams in this environment?"

## **Conscious Communication:**

You served as the 2004 Immediate Past President for the non-profit board of the Board of Directors Network. Tell us about the organization and its mission.

## **Brewer:**

It is an advocacy organization. Our mission is to increase the number of women on corporate boards of directors in Georgia public companies. With this finite mission, we create networking opportunities and programming around educating women to become board-ready. Our programming includes conducting an annual study of women serving on Georgia boards, recognizing outstanding board members and their companies through our Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans Award, and giving board education scholarships.

## **Conscious Communication:**

Why do you think it is critical for women to be in the board room?

## **Brewer:**

Let's be clear here - the CEO reports to the Board. Regardless of how diverse the organization is, the board plays a key role in the overall structure of the entire organization. It is an opportunity to bring an outside voice in and ask all the untraditional and non-obvious questions that can challenge as well as bring to light issues or opportunities the company is not seeing.

## **Conscious Communication:**

Do you believe being a minority female executive has helped or hindered your career?

## **Brewer:**

First of all, it is helpful because it is visible diversity, and if there are targets or numbers to reach, from a hiring perspective, it can open doors. However, that is all it can do - it can open doors, but your credibility will keep you there. I do feel like I'm carrying the flag for African-Americans and women. For that, it makes me work harder because I do respect the visibility, and I like to set the way and path for others to be successful, so I definitely need to be able to deliver. The hindrance can come partly from having to answer questions about my credentials and how did I get here. Even if they think I got to this opportunity by my

racial diversity, clearly there had to be some "smarts" here, and that is how I got where I am.

## **Conscious Communication:**

What advice would you give diverse mid-level managers or individual contributors who aspire to climb through the executive ranks?

## **Brewer:**

I think mid-level managers need to know they need to be very careful about playing the race card. It will eventually backfire on you. It is not sustainable. African-American talent is highly sought after, but so is Latino and so are Asian and Pakistani. It is such a diverse world - it is not all about African-American development. While I realize this is a diverse issue, when people initially think about diversity, they think "women" or "African-Americans," and then there is "all other," and that "all other" is very big, and we all know that. They need to accustom themselves to that reality.

## **Conscious Communication:**

Conclude for us with a description of a futuristic landscape of "diversity" in the corporate arena.

## **Brewer:**

I would predict that diversity is going to go way beyond physical diversity. There will be nontraditional individuals in traditional roles. I think it is going to be global - European women working in larger, more critical roles; African-Americans running Asian companies; the unpopular instead of the cookie-cutter look in CEO roles. I believe, ultimately, the nonverbal will transform diversity.

## Connect Your Career

### Diversity Management:

### A Necessary Tool For Effective Career Management

by Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas



When referring to diversity management, most cite it as something leaders and managers must do. Few say much about how individual contributors can benefit career-wise from an ability to address diverse mixtures effectively.

From the moment individuals enter the world of work, employees must deal with a number of diverse mixtures. They initially have to make a career choice from a varied set of options. I know one talented individual who became paralyzed by his mixture of options and just could not make a selection. He floundered until literally forced by economic circumstances to make a choice.

The joining-up process itself can be viewed as addressing a diverse mixture consisting of the new employee joining the corporation and the leader/manager representing the organization. Differences, similarities and tensions frequently characterize this formative mixture, while both parties strive to develop a mutual set of expectations that

will frame their relationship.

As the individual's career progresses to encompass new responsibilities and opportunities, they must deal with "change" diversity mixtures reflecting a combination of the old and the new. Their ability to advance will be a direct consequence of the ability to deal with diversity issues related to change. Here, I am reminded of a young manager who lost a promotion because he was "diversity-challenged," not in the sense of racism or sexism, but rather in that he could not abandon an old strategy and adopt a new direction.

What are the implications for one wishing to enhance their ability to address diversity? First, monitor yourself as you deal with career-related diversity issues, and pinpoint where you do a good job and also where you perform poorly. Look at the consequences of your performance. This will highlight where you are "diversity-challenged" and what the costs are. This awareness is crucial if you are to be motivated to improve.

Secondly, develop a personal philosophy of diversity management that is broad enough to cover career issues. As you adopt this philosophy, anchor yourself firmly in its concepts and dynamics. Avoid taking a superficial approach to diversity.

Thirdly, once you have selected a personal philosophy, develop the skills that are inherent in the approach. Practice and refine them. This is the route to mastery.

For individuals the stakes are high. Employees with a diversity management capability can gain a competitive advantage, not just with respect to career matters, but wherever they encounter diversity.

*For over 20 years, Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr., has been at the forefront of developing and implementing innovative concepts and strategies for maximizing organizational and individual potential through Diversity Management. He currently serves as the President & CEO of Roosevelt Thomas Consulting & Training, Inc. and President of The American Institute for Managing Diversity (AIMD). He can be reached at [www.rthomasconsulting.com](http://www.rthomasconsulting.com).*

## A Balanced Life



### Diversity for your Personal Life

by **Melanie Miller**

Our tolerance for ambiguity will be tested as we continue to move into the 21st Century. As we move forward there will be much less certainty and increased ambiguity in the business environment as well as in dealing with people. This

will require greater flexibility and proactive responsiveness on our part. Uncertainty will require a greater sense of intuitive ability in the absence of facts and data, to make decisions. How can we begin to master the skills it takes? We must have

clarity of purpose and an urgency to act. Often times we have the answer at work, but what about outside of the workplace? How does this apply to educational institutions, religious organizations, government agencies, community service groups, and my neighbors? If you have any interaction with people at any level, any where, perhaps these tips will help:

- Voluntarily create experiences and friendships across diversity differences; experiencing others is the most powerful way to break down bias and stereotypes;
- The seven second pause! Before you use careless words that can be hurtful, b-r-e-a-t-h-e. Use the same seven second pause that media uses before you say something that you can't retrieve, use wise, strategic words, they lead to healing and relationship building;
- Engage in dialogue. Ask others about their thoughts and ideas...for no other reason than to gain deeper understanding;
- Realize that how we view the world is through our own unique reality, other perspectives are equally valid; and
- Be willing to confront your fears of experiencing differences, raise your levels of comfort with things you have an uneasiness with, that's where we learn!

By exhibiting these behaviors one can begin to strategically weave new meaning into the day-to-day interaction of the 21st Century.

*For more than twelve years, Melanie Miller has achieved great success in linking persuasive human relations skills with sound business practices for leading companies in varied industries. Her focus is optimizing organizational performance and cross-cultural understanding. Melanie is certified as a Master National and Global Diversity Facilitator for several organizations. She is also recognized by the Diversity Leadership Academy headquartered in Atlanta, GA. You can email her at [MMAConsult@aol.com](mailto:MMAConsult@aol.com).*

## RECOMMENDED READING

*Each of the following books was authored by Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas:*

*Beyond Race and Gender: Unleashing the Power of Your Total Workforce by Managing Diversity*

*Building a House for Diversity: A Fable about a Giraffe and an Elephant offers New Strategies for Today's Workforce*

*Building on the Promise of Diversity: How We Can Move to the Next Level in our Workplaces, Our Communities, and Our Society*

*Differences Do Make a Difference*

*Redefining Diversity*



# Conscious Communication

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To provide valuable human capital management strategies and career tips to our clients, career seekers and professional networks.

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