

diversity and inclusion news

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the importance of making diversity inclusive

Take a snapshot of corporate America—and of America itself—and you’ll see an increasingly diverse scene. The majority of children under the age of five are part of a minority ethnic group for the [first time in history](#), according to a 2015 report by the U.S. Census Bureau. Non-white adults now account for [22 percent](#) of the workforce. And women’s participation in the workforce has [risen dramatically](#) since the 1960s.

But there’s still something missing from the picture. And it’s something SUEZ’ Eugene Anderson, Senior Director, Industrial Relations and External Affairs, and a member of the SUEZ Diversity Council, hopes to fill in. “Diversity is the easy piece; inclusion is the tougher piece,” said Anderson, who after eight years, is the longest serving member of the council. “Inclusion is tougher because it requires intention. You can have a diverse group of people, but if you’re the leader, you can choose not to include diverse thoughts of people.”

Excluding diverse thoughts is easier when diverse thinkers are not present. A [study](#) released this year by McKinsey & Co, found that while ethnic minorities (defined in the study as “black or African-Americans, Hispanics or Latinos, Asians or Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, anyone of mixed race, or other nonwhite ethnicities”) represented 39 percent of the population, they formed only 12 percent of executive teams and 15 percent of boards of directors. For their part, women’s participation in the labor market has nearly doubled since 1950 to nearly [57 percent in 2016](#), according to the U.S. Labor Department’s Bureau of Labor Statistics. Still, women—particularly minority women—are underrepresented in leadership roles, according to a [2017 McKinsey report](#).

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the importance of making diversity inclusive *continued*

But inclusion—particularly in the executive ranks—is not only the right thing to do morally, but it is good for business. Indeed, when more women join the workforce, [wages typically rise](#) for everyone, including men, according to Amanda Weinstein, assistant economics professor at the University of Akron. And when women occupy senior positions, [profits rise](#).

For its part, as of February 2018, SUEZ in North America has reached its initial target of 24 percent women in our workforce and exceeded our target of 27 percent women in managerial positions. In the United States, 22 percent of SUEZ' workforce is comprised of ethnic minorities.

“We need the diversity of thought and ideas,” said Anderson. “We need the diversity of perspective. The people we serve are far more diverse than they were 10, 15, 20 years ago. We, too, must be diverse. From a business standpoint, I cannot imagine a company truly realizing its true potential without being diverse and inclusive.”

“SUEZ has unmistakably benefited by including diverse perspectives,” said Michael Salas, chief information and digital officer. It’s about having different thoughts, having different backgrounds, having different views on how to solve a problem. Greater inclusivity produces a better outcome for the team,” said Salas. In fact, since adding six female project managers to the Business Technology Services unit, SUEZ North America has ratcheted up its creativity and efficiency, securing a place in the CIO 100 top IT enterprises for 2018. “I don’t think that would have been possible if it wasn’t for the diverse workforce we have in BTS.”



Eugene Anderson, senior director, Industrial Relations and External Affairs and a member of the SUEZ Diversity Council.



Michael Salas, senior vice president & chief information officer & digital officer and Diversity Council Chair.

the Bergis Mamudi diversity and inclusion award

Each year, SUEZ in North America recognizes employees who pursue leadership positions in diversity, inclusion and fairness with the Bergis Mamudi Diversity and Inclusion Award. The award, established in memory of our first Diversity & Inclusion director, Bergis, was a long-time SUEZ employee who advocated for diversity and inclusion in the workplace. She would be proud of this year's candidates, whose exemplary behavior incorporates diversity and inclusion principles within our communities and work environments.

This year's award went to members of the SUEZ team in Rockland County, NY who worked closely with students at Hudson Valley P-Tech, a small science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) high school. The Rockland County team served as student mentors, guest lecturers, interviewed incoming applicants and hosted visits to the Lake DeForest Water Treatment Plant.

Hudson Valley P-Tech students come from at-risk environments and might not graduate without the personalized attention provided by the faculty and the school's business partners. The students learned cartography and presented their experience, findings, and recommendations. For many, this was their first opportunity to work with a team, set goals, deliver a product, meet a deadline and make a public presentation. At the same time, they have expressed an interest in challenging STEM-related careers—essential to the water industry.

With guidance from Bill Parco, Geographic Information System (GIS) lead, and his colleague, Matt Brenner, GIS specialist, the students met weekly for one semester and were given a challenge: Devise a better GIS method to help SUEZ identify and prioritize critical customers. While GIS system can identify specific addresses impacted by an outage, they cannot identify critical customers (hospitals, nursing homes, schools, etc.). "One of the unique aspects of the P-Tech program involved inviting the students to help find a solution to a real problem faced by SUEZ," said Paula McEvoy, director of engineering, in Rockland County, NY.



Bill Parco and Matt Brenner serve as mentors for students from Hudson Valley P-Tech, a small STEM based high school in Rockland County NY.

diversity thrives in our organization

Each year, SUEZ in North America singles out one person or group to receive the Bergis Mamudi award for their diversity efforts. But, there are other worthy candidates whose efforts to promote diversity are worth noting.

Other candidates for this year's Bergis Mamudi award included Sharon Williams, systems and vendor manager, procurement, who was nominated by her supervisor, Sam Ruff, for increasing SUEZ' supplier diversity in North America. "Her efforts to engage with new diverse suppliers increases the size of the vendor pool that our operations and management team can draw from," said Ruff. In 2016, SUEZ spent \$5.7 million and did business with 18 new diverse suppliers.

Karen Norton, director of Accounts Payable, was nominated by Sharon Tammen, supervisor Accounts Payable for her enthusiastic, respectful and inclusive leadership. "Karen provides a work environment that engages us all. She involves us all in volunteering, training and appreciation," said Tammen. The volunteerism has included bringing nine members of the Accounts Payable department to Pony Power Therapies in Mahwah, NJ for a day of teambuilding. Pony Power offers horse-assisted activities to children and adults with a broad spectrum of developmental and physical disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, seizure disorder, developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, visual impairments and traumatic brain injury.

Also nominated were Temple Ballard, vice president, technical direction, Water Technologies & Solutions, and Kevin Tarantino, manager, talent acquisition at SUEZ in North America, for their successful efforts to recruit more women engineers through SUEZ' Engineering Rotation Program. The program has helped to increase the number of females in engineering as well as the amount of entry level employees in Richmond, VA, which aided in diversifying the location.

Through the Engineering Rotation Program, SUEZ hires four entry-level engineers and rotates them every six months into different departments within our Water Technologies & Solutions division. At the end of the two year term the evaluations from each department are compared to the rotation engineer's own evaluation of the rotation and they are placed in a role that is mutually agreed upon.



working side-by-side with the developmentally disabled

It's one thing to know about developmental disabilities—severe, chronic conditions that limit learning, language, mobility, and self-sufficiency. It's another thing to improve the lives of the more than 5 million Americans with such disabilities.

Donna Meltzer, chief executive officer of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), wants to close the gap. That's why the NACDD devoted the month March—designated as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month by President Ronald Reagan in 1987—to encourage legislators, businesses and educators to help those with disabilities more fully integrated into their communities.

“While we still aim to increase public awareness, our focus has shifted to the importance of inclusion and living life side-by-side,” said Meltzer. “This year’s theme was ‘See Me for Me!’ To us, this means looking beyond someone’s disability and seeing them as a person and not just a person with a disability.”

A key component of that inclusion is employment. The developmentally disabled are vastly unemployed or underemployed despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work in the community, said Meltzer. In fact, only about 15 percent of people receiving services from state agencies developmentally disabled work in integrated employment, according to the NACDD. Moreover, many individuals continue to be placed in segregated “prevocational” programs and sheltered workshops where they are paid below minimum wage.

If you want to take a positive step in integrating the developmentally disabled into your community or your office, you are encouraged to contact SUEZ’ Human Resources department, as well as your state’s NACDD council. Each state has a council, which is represented nationally by the NACDD in Washington, D.C. Your local council’s contact information can be [found here](#).



one-on-one with Catherine Ricou

In a male-dominated industry, Catherine Ricou, Senior Vice President, Chief Engineering, Innovation and Technical Officer, well understands the challenges and benefits of diversity. But Catherine reminds us that diversity comes in many different forms.



You've been involved with diversity efforts at SUEZ. Can you think of a specific example when there was a conscious effort to improve diversity? How did it help?

CR: Yes, the first one that comes to mind is a project in France. We were building a waste treatment facility and trying to bring innovation to this project. But we were all from the same kind of background, and after a while we felt we were recycling the same ideas. So, we decided to ask two external partners, a construction firm and a subcontractor, to co-design the new solution with us. The result was that the diversity of opinion totally opened the project to innovative ideas that resulted in the perfect solution for the customer.

What does 'diversity of opinion' look like in a practical sense?

CR: In a company, diversity can be no more than promoting collaboration between employees working in different silos on their specific vertical project. While it might not seem that ambitious, getting people together who wouldn't ordinarily have the opportunity to collaborate is a big first step. I think we need push people out of their comfort zone. To create diversity, you need to have people break out of their silos and collaborate, or you need to hire new people.

Have you done that? Brought in diversity through a new hire?

CR: Yes, recently I decided to hire a Millennial whose profile was quite different. You know, he's not from the water industry. He's an entrepreneur, and I had to struggle with that decision. Would he want to go back to his entrepreneurship, and so on? But bringing him into the company with new ideas has pushed everyone out of their comfort zone because he brings a new perspective. I think that's not only interesting, but necessary because it pushes innovation.

And what is his background?

CR: Before joining the water industry, he was working in microbiology and as an entrepreneur in the robotics industry. And, well, we don't have many profiles like that. It's an interesting way to bring diversity and new talent. The reason I wanted to hire him is to bring a more diverse vision and a new opportunity to challenge innovation. As managers, we tend to hire people like us because we are sure that it will be a good fit from a cultural perspective. But that vision is too shortsighted.

African-American leaders show a way forward

African-Americans today are far better represented in civil engineering and environmental sciences than in years past. Regrettably, the lives of some black leaders whose work improved the lives of all Americans have begun fading from memory. Here are two you should know about.

The first and most recent of these was [Hazel Johnson](#) (1935-2011), whose political activism 24 years ago led to President Bill Clinton's signing of the [Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898](#). That order directs federal agencies to make achieving environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations.

Johnson, a resident of Chicago's Altgeld Gardens public housing development, launched her campaign after her husband, John, died of lung cancer in 1969. She documented illnesses in her community and founded a civic organization that pressured the city to remove asbestos from Altgeld Gardens.



Hazel Johnson, pictured at far right.



The second African-American leader you should know about is [Gen. Hugh G. Robinson](#), who was the first African-American to serve as a general officer in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the first black soldier to serve as a military aide to a U.S. president. (Lyndon Johnson).

After Gen. Robinson graduated from West Point in 1954, he earned his master's degree in civil engineering from the MIT. In Vietnam, he commanded a combat engineering battalion and was awarded the Air Medal, a Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit and an Army Commendation Medal.

Gen. Robinson later served as deputy director of the Army Corp's civil works and in 1980 assumed command of the Southwestern Division, overseeing major water-related projects. In civilian life, Robinson became CEO of The Tetra Group, a construction management firm, and later chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, TX.

international women's day marks progress, offers challenges

By most measures, SUEZ in North America has done well to promote the women in our ranks: Women comprise 24 percent of our workforce and 27 percent of managerial positions. That's slightly better than the industry averages of 22 percent and 23 percent, respectively. But we still have a long way to go to reach gender parity—a point underscored in [International Women's Day](#) celebrations held in SUEZ offices on March 8.

"Don't expect special treatment as a woman," said Nancy Fox, Director of Engineering, Delaware, as a panelist on a discussion on women in engineering. "You have to earn the confidence and the respect. It doesn't come free." The talk, moderated by Catherine Ricou, Senior Vice President, Chief Engineering, Innovation and Technical Officer, was broadcast to the company over Skype from SUEZ offices in Paramus. It was one of several International Women's Day events organized by SUEZ' human resources department and our Women's Leadership Network (WLN) business resource group.

In addition to Fox, Ricou's panel included Paula McEvoy, Director of Engineering, N.Y. Division; Brittany Kovary, Staff Engineer; and Elizabeth Kenyon, Project Manager. "So, what qualities must you have to be a woman in engineering?" Ricou asked her panelists. "You have to be confident and you have to be honest, because if you're not confident in your work, then no one is going to follow you," said Kovary.

Below: Catherine Ricou, Senior Vice President, Chief Engineering, Innovation and Technical Officer, moderated a panel discussion on women in engineering. The discussion was broadcast to the company over Skype from the SUEZ corporate office in Paramus.



Andrienne Payson, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, joined in an earlier panel hosted by David Stanton, president Utility Operations, in issuing a call to action for management executives to take steps to promote women within their organization.

Throughout North America, SUEZ employees held other events. A collection was taken to support [Bergen County's Mentoring Moms](#) and its Intergenerational Women's Empowerment Conference, which was held at Bergen Community College on April 10. The conference sought to inspire underserved Bergen County women, as well as students, to rise above the negativity of their circumstances.

In Westchester County, NY, a breakfast discussion featured four women who shared their thoughts on what the day means to them and women around the world. The speakers included Deb Rizzi, Director of Internal Communications NY Division; Alise Seguinot, Manager of Customer Operations for NY Division; Diana Arthur, Westchester Engineer; and Linda Lesnewski, a Production Employee in Westchester.

In Richmond, VA, workers were asked to write down a few thoughts on the woman they admire the most, the value of women in the workplace, or their personal commitment to improve their habits on inclusivity in the workplace. The employees' contributions were compiled and on display on a monitor at the reception desk.

And in Hackensack, NJ women were treated to brunch and received a card—written and delivered anonymously—with a written note of inspiration or celebration of her unique qualities. The theme of the day? "Inspire."

Below: In Hackensack, NJ women were treated to brunch and received a card—written and delivered anonymously—with a written note of inspiration or celebration of her unique qualities.



Left: Employees in Rockland County, NY celebrated with a breakfast event that featured several speakers that discussed what this day meant to them and to women around the world.



meet the members 2018 diversity and inclusion council

Eugene Anderson

Senior Director, Industrial Relations & External Affairs

Lynda DiMenna

Director, Environment, Health and Safety Audits, and Security

Sarah Frey

Senior Digital and Social Media Specialist

Christopher Jacobs

Manager, Rhode Island Operations

Elizabeth Jarrett

Director, Contract and Administration Support

Kanwer Khan

Vice President, Environmental Compliance, Health, Security and Safety

Ritu Madan

Recruiter

Joe Marano

Director of Talent Development, Diversity and SUEZ North America Foundation

Eva Martinez

Director, Labor Relations

Michael Salas

(Council Chair)
Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer and Digital Officer

Sharon Williams

Manager, Supply Chain Systems Reporting

Our Diversity Definition

Diversity means differences among individuals in our workforce, suppliers and communities such as age, business background, culture, disability, education level, employee status, ethnicity, family status, gender, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, thinking styles, etc. These differences provide a wealth of resources to our companies.

Mission Statement

SUEZ will be the reference company for our industry, recognized for our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We will provide an environment that celebrates uniqueness and enables all employees to contribute to our success and share in the rewards.

For comments and suggestions

To submit story ideas, articles, comments or suggestions, please email the Diversity and Inclusion Council at DiversityCouncil@suez-na.com