Pearl Meyer

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Building Board Inclusivity

Beth Florin, Pearl Meyer's chief executive officer, talks about creating an inclusive board.

Q: You have been working with companies for a number of years on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. What are some takeaways that boards can apply to their own DE&I goals?

Beth: The data show that boards are absolutely becoming more diverse, both in gender and in ethnicity. Inclusivity is far more difficult to quantify. I think it's important to recognize that the improvements in diversity have come about because specific attention has been paid to the issue, and that same approach can carry over to inclusion, even when it's going to be more difficult to gauge success. You have to consider both aims. Just as it is with management and the full organization, the real benefits of board diversity—beyond just checking the box—can only come about when those diverse voices are heard and have a seat at the decision-making table.

Q: Have you seen boards take action on inclusivity that bears positive results?

Beth: Absolutely. The boards that are intentional about inclusivity are willing to take action. No matter how small individual changes might seem, they can add up and drive improvement. For example, we know of several boards that have made it a point to set up meeting opportunities between directors who don't know each other very well or to assign seating at meetings to facilitate new relationships. Updating the board and committee charters to promote inclusive language and building in requirements for conducting open, thoughtful dialog is another deliberate way to make positive change and to signal that this is a priority for the board. Ultimately, the goal is to build a group dynamic that takes full advantage of each director's vast talent and varied experiences.

About Pearl Meyer

Pearl Meyer is the leading advisor to boards and senior management helping organizations build, develop, and reward great leadership teams that drive long-term success. Our strategy-driven compensation and leadership consulting services act as powerful catalysts for value creation and competitive advantage by addressing the critical

links between people and outcomes. Our clients stand at the forefront of their industries and range from emerging high-growth, not-for-profit, and private organizations to the Fortune 500.