

**The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity
2017 Mid-Year CLE Seminar and Webinar**

**Opportunity at the Crossroads:
Using Authentic Leadership Presence to
Interrupt Unconscious Bias**

June 9, 2017
1:00 - 4:00 pm EDT
Practising Law Institute (PLI) Conference Center
New York, New York

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Meeting Overview

Why You Should Attend

The LCLD Mid-Year Presentation—***Using Authentic Leadership Presence to Interrupt Unconscious Bias***—will provide lawyers on the path to leadership with insights, tools, and strategies to build strong, influential relationships with clients and colleagues, even in the face of initial bias.

This program will move beyond traditional conversations about executive presence to explore the additional guidance that may be needed to help diverse lawyers to understand how the dynamics of diversity may affect one's self perception and the perception of others.

Together, we will identify and discuss the elements of presence that are particularly important for building credibility for diverse lawyers and how to bring those elements together in ways that can interrupt and transcend bias.

The LCLD Mid-Year Presentation—***Using Authentic Leadership Presence to Interrupt Unconscious Bias***—is open to any participant from LCLD Member organizations, including managing partners, general counsel, Fellows, Pathfinders, Scholars, diversity professionals, and others who aspire to leadership in the profession and are stakeholders on issues of surrounding diversity and inclusion within their law firm or corporate legal department.

The subsequent panel will feature practicing lawyers who will share their personal stories and experiences and offer practical tips, strategies, and ideas about developing a strong, authentic leadership presence, particularly when encountering the conscious or unconscious bias of others.

What You Will Learn

- Insights about how cultivating an authentic leadership presence as a lawyer can aid in moving beyond bias when building relationships with clients and others
- Tools for accessing and expressing an inner roadmap to authenticity
- A framework for using presence to interrupt and transcend bias
- Perspective and wisdom from accomplished lawyers whose personal experiences will provide guidance and strategies for attendees

Intended Audience

The LCLD Mid-Year Presentation—***Using Authentic Leadership Presence to Interrupt Unconscious Bias***—is open to managing partners, general counsel, diversity professionals, and other attorneys from LCLD Member organizations who are stakeholders on issues surrounding diversity within their law firm or corporate legal department.

Agenda

12:00 - 1:00 PM

Networking Lunch

1:00 - 3:00 PM

Using Authentic Leadership to Interrupt Bias

*Kate Ebner, Executive Director, Institute for Transformational Leadership; CEO, The Nebo Company | Kim C. D'Abreu, Principal Consultant, Diversity Dimensions Consulting; Leadership Coach, The Nebo Company
Moderated by Lori L. Lorenzo, Esq., Program Director, LCLD*

- Defining “authentic presence” in the context of lawyers who represent diversity in their firms
- Identifying the nuances and implications of being “authentic” when not of the majority culture in your practice
- Framework for using authentic presence to interrupt and transcend bias when communicating with legal colleagues and clients
- Developing strategies that support success for diverse lawyers

3:00 - 3:10 PM

Break

3:10 - 4:00 PM

A Discussion of Presence and Bias with the Leaders of the Profession

*N. Cornell Boggs III, Esq., Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Toys “R” Us | Susan L. Lees, Esq., Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Allstate Insurance | Jorge A. Mestre, Esq., Managing Partner, Rivero Mestre LLP | Jodi J. Schwartz, Esq., Partner, Tax, at Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz
Moderated by Lori Lorenzo, Esq., Program Director, LCLD*

- Discussion about experiences in developing strong, authentic leadership presence both in law firms and in-house legal departments and uses of presence to meet, interrupt, and work through and beyond unconscious bias
- Defining the nuances of succeeding in law firm culture for lawyers of color
- Identification of tips, tools, and “universal” advice based on the experiences of panelists

Detailed Presentation Outline

- 1) **Objective:** To move beyond traditional conversations about executive presence to explore the additional guidance that may be needed to help diverse lawyers *to discover strategies for recognizing and interrupting bias through conscious leadership presence.*
- 2) **Today, we'll be exploring how diverse lawyers can use authentic leadership presence to interrupt bias.**
 - a) Through the intentional cultivation of presence and a commitment to courageous authenticity, one can open up connections that are the basis of lasting, trust-based relationships with clients and colleagues.
 - b) Defining Key Terms:
 - i) Authenticity
 - ii) Leadership Presence
 - iii) Interrupt
 - iv) Bias
- 3) **Authenticity:** “Authenticity refers to the degree of congruence between internal values and external expressions. As a psychological construct, authenticity reflects general values of knowing, accepting, and remaining true to one’s self by acting in accord with one’s principles.” (Laura Morgan Roberts)
 - a) Some researchers have extended the definition to include “the act of countering pressures to suppress one’s social identity, and openly claiming one’s race, gender, sexual orientation, religious background, or social class, among other social categories.”
 - b) Authenticity is especially important for women’s and minorities’ position in groups.
- 4) **Covering up and staying below the radar exacts a huge toll.**
 - a) Suppressing one’s authentic self can have dramatic consequences, including isolation, alienation, and disengagement, with predictable effects on commitment and performance.
 - b) When people fail to express their true feelings and beliefs, they may suffer psychological and relational costs including tension, anxiety, and alienation. Hewlett and her colleagues at the Center for Work Life Policy conclude from their research on minority executives: “For many [professionals of color], the need to ‘render invisible’ their real identities has exacted a huge toll. For a substantial number, covering up and staying below the radar has produced isolation, alienation, and disengagement—with predictable effects on commitment and performance.”⁸ Suppressing one’s authentic self can have dramatic consequences, so it is important to uncover strategies for enhancing authenticity in the workplace. (Sylvia Ann Hewitt)
- 5) **Within the legal profession and in virtually any organization, it is worth acknowledging that some level of cohesion, conformance, and compliance by an individual is necessary.** And simultaneously firms may wrestle with the extent to which workers are expected to conform to the company’s interest with personal, family, individual interest can be subordinate, placing organizational values in tension with authentic expression:
 - a) Innovation, authenticity, genuineness, diversity, self-expression, and flexibility.

- b) Productivity, credibility, expertise, predictability, trustworthiness, control, and standardization.
 - c) It is important to uncover strategies for enhancing authenticity in the workplace in order to balance the dynamics of organizational culture and expectations and individual identity and culture.
- 6) **Authentic leaders are emotionally intelligent – self-aware as well as comfortable with the diversity provided by others.**
- a) “Authentic leaders are comfortable in their skin; they know where they come from and who they are, and they know how to use their backgrounds to build a rapport with followers. Authentic leaders are not threatened by people with other origins; they welcome them. They are sensitive in communicating their origins and are aware of the differences in cultural attitudes toward their backgrounds. Authentic leaders know how to strike a balance between their distinctiveness and the cultures in which they operate.” (Goffee and Jones)
- 7) **What does it mean to be authentic at work?**
- a) True authenticity must include the full scope, depth, and breadth of one’s identity. This means recognition of the strengths one’s full identity brings and how those strengths might best be leveraged for your own benefit and for the good of your firm.
 - b) Quote re: authenticity: “When you get me, you are not getting an image. You are not getting a figurehead. You’re not getting a theme song. You’re getting all of me. And I bring my stuff with me: my history, my past, Mississippi, Nashville. I’m coming in with the sistahs in the church. I’m bringing Sojourner Truth with me. The greatest thing about what I do is that I’m in a position to change people’s lives.” (Oprah Winfrey, 2001)
- 8) **Emotional intelligence is the differentiator between good lawyers and great leaders.
Emotional intelligence is essential for recognizing and transcending bias.**
- a) “Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal. Great leadership works through emotions.” (Daniel Goleman, Emotional Intelligence)
 - b) Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence Framework (Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management) provides a simple model for learning and growing as a lawyer/leader through relationships with others.
 - i) Emotional intelligence is the basis of great relationships, trust, and credibility.
 - ii) Emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness. With greater awareness, one can see more choices and can manage challenging situations more effectively.
 - iii) We will explore how the Goleman’s model plays together with authentic leadership presence and strategies for interrupting bias as we move through today’s program.
- 9) **How do you know when presence is present?**
- a) Presence is the fundamental way a leader can engage the full energies and dedication of others to a common end.
 - i) This use of presence is called *Leadership Presence*.
 - b) Leadership presence is the fundamental ability to connect authentically with the thoughts and feelings of others, in order to motivate and inspire them toward a desired outcome.
 - c) What does authentic leadership presence look like in the practice of law?

10) Mehrabian Study: 7-38-55% Rule

- a) Why do we trust someone? What makes someone credible?
- b) When the speaker is communicating feelings or attitudes face-to-face **and** there is incongruence, the **believability** of their message is influenced:
 - i) 7% by content
 - ii) 38% by voice, tone, tempo
 - iii) 55% by body language
 - iv) 93% of building trust/credibility is communicated via the body!
 - v) Leadership presence builds credibility

11) We each have a “signature” presence whether or not we consciously pay attention to our presence.

- a) Exercise:
 - i) Reflect in writing: (3 minutes)
 - (1) How do you describe your own presence?
 - (2) What feedback have you received about your presence?
 - (3) How would you like others to experience you in professional settings and as a lawyer and leader in the legal profession?
 - (4) What gets in your way or holds you back from bringing the presence that you intend?
 - ii) Dyads: Share your thoughts with a colleague. (7 min)
 - iii) Full Group Debrief: (5 min)

12) CTI research finds that professionals of color, like their Caucasian counterparts, prioritize gravitas over communication, and communication over appearance.

- a) Yet, “cracking the code” of executive presence presents unique challenges for professionals of color because standards of appropriate behavior, speech, and attire demand they suppress or sacrifice aspects of their cultural identity in order to conform.
- b) They overwhelmingly feel that EP at their firm is based on white male standards — African Americans, especially, were 97% more likely than their Caucasian counterparts to agree with this assessment — and that conforming to these standards requires altering their authenticity, a new version of “bleached-out professionalism” that contributes to feelings of resentment and disengagement.
- c) People of color already feel they have to work harder than their Caucasian counterparts just to be perceived “on a par” with them; more than half (56%) of minority professionals also feel they are held to a stricter code of executive presence standards. (Sylvia Anne Hewitt)

13) Unconscious Bias:

- a) Unconscious bias is simply listening through the lens of our experiences. Our brains are hard-wired to create shortcuts and associations both as a “fight or flight” evolutionary response and to efficiently manage millions of pieces of data/stimuli.
- b) The problem with unconscious bias is that decisions are made every day that can have an adverse impact in the workplace especially in hiring, promotion, rewards, assignments, and professional development.
- c) Have you experienced bias—unconscious or conscious—in the workplace as you practice law?

- 14) **Diverse lawyers must balance the tension between authenticity and law firm culture and interests.**
- a) Within the legal profession and in any organization, it is worth acknowledging that some level of cohesion, conformance and compliance by an individual is necessary. And simultaneously firms may wrestle with the extent to which professionals are expected to conform to the company's interest with personal, family, individual interest can be subordinate, placing organizational values in tension with one another:
- 15) **The PRES Leadership Presence Model: (Being Present, Reaching Out, Expressiveness, Self Knowing) provides a framework for understanding the elements of leadership presence.**
- a) The PRES Model draws attention to all four aspects of emotional intelligence.
 - i) Being present is the basis of self-awareness.
 - ii) Reaching out and Expressiveness speak to self and social awareness, self and relationship management.
 - iii) Self knowing refers directly to self awareness and self management – and is the basis of both great leadership and authentic leadership presence.
- 16) **What happens to leadership presence in the face of bias?**
- a) Knowing oneself on a “good day” is one thing; under pressure and, especially, in the face of bias, one can be thrown off and lose access to authentic presence.
 - b) Encountering bias can lead to loss of resilience and flexibility, sense of personal choice. Loss of connection, listening, and empathy, incongruent body language and message, and loss of access to inner wisdom, values, and history.
- 17) **The Five R’s Framework (Recognize, React, Regroup, Respond, Renew) is a helpful tool for understanding how to interrupt and move beyond bias with authentic presence.**
- a) **Recognize:**
 - i) Think of a time when you have been treated in a way that demonstrated bias to you.
 - ii) What happened?
 - iii) How did you handle this challenge?
 - iv) What worked/didn’t work in this situation?
 - v) How did you feel emotionally and physically when you experienced this situation?
 - b) **The pressure to disprove a stereotype can add stress and give diverse lawyers an additional “task” in a professional situation.**
 - i) “In addition to learning new skills, knowledge, and ways of thinking—or in addition to trying to perform well in a workplace—you are also trying to slay a ghost in the room, the negative stereotype and its allegation about you and your group. You are multi-tasking and because the stakes involved are high—survival and success versus failure in an area that is important to you, multitasking is stressful and distracting.” (Claude Steele, 2010)
 - ii) “Non-white leaders must be bi-culturally fluent—leading in ways that resonate with their own racial group or sense of self while also connecting with the dominant ways of working in a white dominated environment.” (Ospina, Foldy, 2009)
 - iii) In emotional intelligence terms, one’s ability to recognize bias relates to both self awareness (“Am I being too sensitive?”) and social awareness (understanding and even empathy with another person).
 - iv) Our ability to “show up” fully and authentically depends upon the context in which we find ourselves.

- (1) Discussion:
- (a) How do you think the legal context in which you work impacts your identity both inside and outside of the firm or organization?
 - (b) How does your context “shape” your authentic presence?

c) **React**

- i) Initially, as we worked through the 5 R's Framework, we chose the word “recoil” rather than “react” to describe the second movement of interrupting and transcending bias through presence. Recoil seems to accurately describe the feeling and instinct one has after recognizing bias in another.
 - (1) However, we selected “react” because it offers a direct connection to the EI concept of self-awareness and self-management.
 - (2) In recognizing our reaction to another person, we can then begin to separate the emotional reaction from our choice of action (regrouping).
- ii) Neuroscience shows us that, under stress, the reactionary brain narrows its focus, loses executive functioning in favor of quick action and short-term response over relationship.
 - (1) This is called an amygdala “hijack.”
 - (2) Without awareness that an amygdala hijack is occurring, one might react in a way that damages a key relationship and limits one’s own options.
 - (3) Authentic leadership presence is responsive, but able to manage reactivity.
 - (4) Video Awareness Test: Moonwalking Bear.
 - (5) The reactionary brain shifts into “whack a mole” mode and jumps defensively on the next thing that happens. You can see how this can have a negative effect on one’s presence, credibility, and effectiveness.

d) **Regroup**

- i) “Before heading into a situation where we may be challenged, we can reduce our anxiety by reaffirming the parts of our authentic best selves we value most.
 - (1) When we feel safe with ourselves, we become significantly less defensive and more open to feedback, making us better problem solvers, too.” (Amy Cuddy, Presence)
- ii) Values, self-affirmation, and presence
 - (1) Our values are who we are because they are the basis of our behavior and serve as inner guide points for our choices and actions.
 - (2) Once you recognize your core values, you can make leadership and life choices that are true to who you are.
 - (3) The more you make choices that are aligned with your values, the more satisfying and fulfilling your life becomes and the more effective you are as a leader.
- iii) Discover your values as anchors to an authentic presence and identity:
 - (1) What do I stand for? Why?
 - (2) What do I believe in? Why?
 - (3) What am I passionate about? Why?
 - (4) Just what is it that I really care about? Why?
 - (5) What makes me jump for joy? Weep and wail? Why?
 - (6) Can you name your top four values?
 - (a) Exercise: Values Alignment
 - (i) Take five minutes to discuss in pairs (or jot down) a way in which your identity and values are congruent and with and incongruent with your firm’s or organization’s values.
 - (ii) What could you or your organization do to strengthen this alignment?

- iv) Centering is a strategy for regrouping.
 - (1) Center is a state or attitude as well as a specific posture or way of acting. It is a state where we come into relationship with our bodily self in a way that is balanced and present.
 - (2) Center is your energetic base camp.
 - (3) We line up our structure in order to connect with that balance within.
 - (4) Centering is not an end in itself but a self-connection we can carry into our dialogue with others, our work, and the deeper aspects of who we are. (Source: Anatomy of Change, Richard Strozzi Heckler (1993))
- v) The S.T.O.P. tool offers a way to regroup as well:
 - (1) S: Stop what you are doing.
 - (2) T: Take a cleansing breath.
 - (3) O: Observe your thoughts, feelings, and emotions.
 - (4) P: Proceed with awareness, love, and self-compassion.
- vi) To return to center, notice your thoughts *and* your body.
 - (1) Thoughts:
 - (a) Name your reaction—write it down.
 - (b) Ask a question—of self or others.
 - (c) Think of someone or some place that you love.
 - (d) Name one thing that you appreciate about this person or the situation you are facing.
 - (e) Shift your focus—what's your intention here? What matters most?
 - (f) Think of a moment in your life when you were proud.
 - (g) Notice what shifts in your body as your thoughts shift.
 - (2) Body:
 - (a) Feel yourself fully in your length, width, and depth.
 - (b) Bring awareness to your feet, hands, head, and breath.
 - (c) Take a deep breath—drop your breathing to your heart center or belly.
 - (d) Connect both feet with the ground/floor.
 - (e) Relax your jaw, forehead, and eyes.
 - (f) Pull your shoulders up and down your back.
 - (g) Notice your hands and grip.
 - (h) Check your overall shape and posture as you sit or stand.
 - (i) Hold your left little finger.
 - (j) Invite relaxation or breath into constricted places.
- vii) When you are centered, you are able to access your resources, values, history, strengths, and wisdom to make wise choices that build credibility and relationship as you choose how you will interrupt bias and move beyond it.
 - (1) The “centered brain” can access its executive functions in the face of bias.
 - (2) Forward-looking.
 - (3) Sees bigger picture.
 - (4) Retains perspective and can see “forest through trees.”
 - (5) Maintain composure and inner balance even in adverse and extreme circumstances.
 - (6) Aligns and inspires others through leadership communication.

e) **Respond**

- i) Choose your response. What are your options?
- ii) Consider using a simple phrase that buys you time and opens up the possibility of greater understanding, empathy, and reconciliation: “Tell me more...”

- iii) Responding means bringing your voice to express your perspective.
 - (1) “People are constantly observing your behavior and forming theories about your competence, character, and commitment, which are rapidly disseminated in your workplace. It is only wise to add your voice in framing others’ theories about who you are and what you can accomplish.” (Laura Morgan Steele)
- iv) Focus on what you can control, not what you can’t.

f) **Renew**

- i) Make it a priority to renew yourself.
 - (1) Build an intentional self-care plan.
 - (2) Be fully clear on your values in the context of organizational dynamics.
 - (3) Engage a support network, including mentors, friends, and sponsors with and outside of the workplace.
 - (a) What does support look like to you?
 - (4) Other ideas?

g) **Strategies for using authentic leadership presence to interrupt and overcome bias.**

- i) Encountering bias may be inevitable, but you do not need to be at the mercy of the situation. With awareness and attention to the 5 R’s, you can sustain connection with yourself and others during challenging moments.
- ii) With your last partner, describe a situation that you currently face at work in which you fear there may be bias. **Recognize** the situation by describing it in brief to your partner. Describe your initial **Reaction** and the reaction or response that you would prefer to bring. **Regroup** by naming the value in which you will anchor your response. **Respond** by identifying the actions you’d like to take. **Renew** by planning how you will support yourself before, during, and after the conversation.
 - (1) (5 minutes each; put emphasis on identifying a values-based response and identifying the renewal steps you will take to support yourself.)

h) **When Bias Occurs: Strategies for Authentic Leadership Presence**

- i) Hold a clear, conscious intention for yourself as a professional.
- ii) Choose to connect rather than withdraw.
- iii) Draw upon your values to align your inner identity and outward demonstration.
- iv) Tap into your identity as source of strength, courage, and confidence.
- v) Aim for deeper connections.
- vi) Adopt a centering practice.
- vii) Use the STOP practice each day.
- viii) Pause and identify sources of resilience and cultural anchors.
- ix) Add Presence to meeting preparation:
 - (1) What’s the presence you want to convey?
 - (2) How will you express this through your energy, mood, and body?
 - (3) Identify/do a practice that will help cultivate this.
- x) Seek feedback: “What do you notice about my presence as you talk with me?”
- xi) Exercise your social capital if needed.
- xii) Make self-care and renewal a priority.

- i) **Working with authentic presence requires awareness, intentionality, commitment to the 5 R's, time, feedback, and practice.**
 - i) "When people draw upon or integrate different parts of their identities they are more creative in generating new ideas and solving problems. People who construct more positive identities are also better able to cope with threats to their identities, such as being criticized harshly or demeaned at work." (Laura Morgan-Roberts)
 - ii) Remember, you have a choice.
 - (1) Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. (Viktor Frankl)
- j) **Closing**
 - i) What will you take from today's conversation?

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Values Assessment

Instructions: Clarifying your primary values is a very important process. Our values are who we are because they serve as inner guides for our choices and actions. Once you recognize your core values, you can make leadership and life choices that are true to who you are. The more you make choices that are *aligned* with your values, the more satisfying and fulfilling your life becomes and the more effective you are as a leader.

To discover your values, consider the following questions:

- What do I stand for? Why?
- What do I believe in? Why?
- What am I passionate about? Why?
- Just what is it that I really care about? Why?
- What makes me jump for joy? Weep and wail? Why?

Please select the four values from the next page that are most meaningful to you. (Ask yourself the question, “Which values are as important to me as the air I breathe?”) This is a sample list. Feel free to add values that are missing for you.

After you have selected your values, answer the following questions in writing for each of your values:

1. Why I chose this value?
2. How do I honor this value in my life?
3. What happens to me when I’m not actively honoring this value?
4. How am I as a person when this value is being honored?

Acceptance	Intimacy
Accomplishment	Joy
Achievement	Knowledge
Acknowledgment	Love
Adventure	Leadership
Advancement	Loyalty
Aesthetics	Money
Authenticity	Mastery
Autonomy	Nature
Balance	Order
Beauty	Peace
Challenge	Personal Growth
Clarity	Philanthropy
Collaboration	Power
Communication	Practicality
Community	Precision
Compassion	Presence
Connection	Prestige
Contribution	Recognition
Courage	Relationship
Creativity	Resilience
Culture	Respect
Education	Responsibility
Empathy	Risk Taking
Empowerment	Romance
Excellence	Security
Expertise	Service
Exploration	Spirituality
Fairness	Spontaneity
Family	Stability
Fitness	Status
Financial Security	Success
Freedom	Teamwork
Friendship	Trust
Fulfillment	Truth
Full Self-Expression	Variety
Fun	Volunteerism
Generosity	Wealth
Harmony	Winning
Health / Well-Being	Wisdom
Helpfulness	Work
Heroism	Other: _____
Honesty	
Humor	
Imagination	
Independence	
Integrity	



DEMOCRAPHICS

Cracking the Code That Stalls People of Color

by Sylvia Ann Hewlett

JANUARY 22, 2014

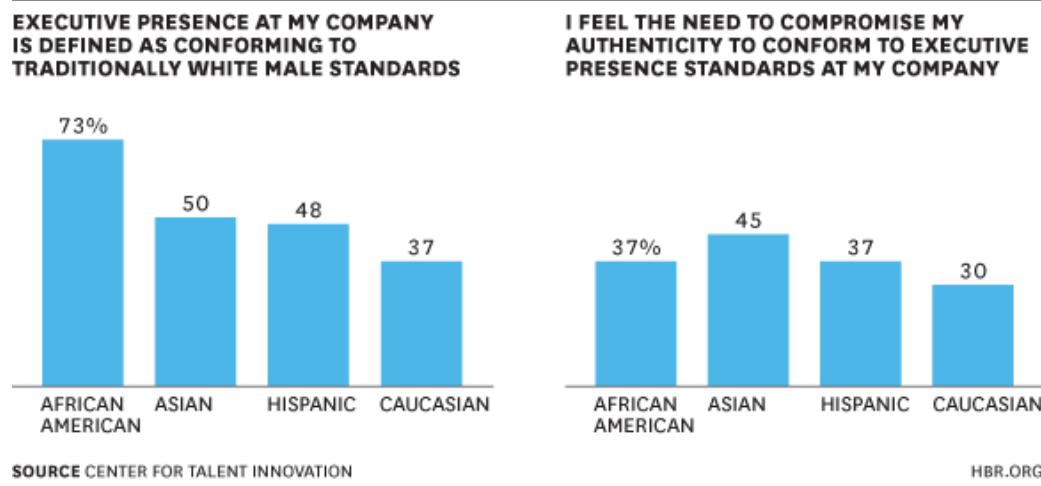
It's a topic which corporations once routinely ignored, then dismissed, and are only now beginning to discuss: the dearth of professionals of color in senior positions. [Professionals of color hold only 11% of executive posts](#) in corporate America. [Among Fortune 500 CEOs](#), only six are black, eight are Asian, and eight are Hispanic.

Performance, hard work, and sponsors get top talent recognized and promoted, but "leadership potential" isn't enough to lever men and women into the executive suite. Top jobs are given to those who also look and act the part, who manifest "executive presence" (EP). [According to new CTI research \(PDF\)](#), EP constitutes 26% of what senior leaders say it takes to get the next promotion. Yet because senior leaders are overwhelmingly Caucasian, professionals of color (African-American, Asian, and Hispanic individuals) find themselves at an immediate disadvantage in trying to look, sound, and act like a leader. And the feedback that might help them do so is markedly absent at all levels of management.

EP rests on three pillars: gravitas (the core characteristic, according to 67% of the 268 senior executives surveyed), an amalgam of behaviors that convey confidence, inspire trust, and bolster credibility; communication skills (according to 28%); and appearance, the filter through which communication skills and gravitas become more apparent. While they are aware of the importance of executive presence, men and women of color are nonetheless hard-pressed to interpret and embody aspects of a code written by and for white men.

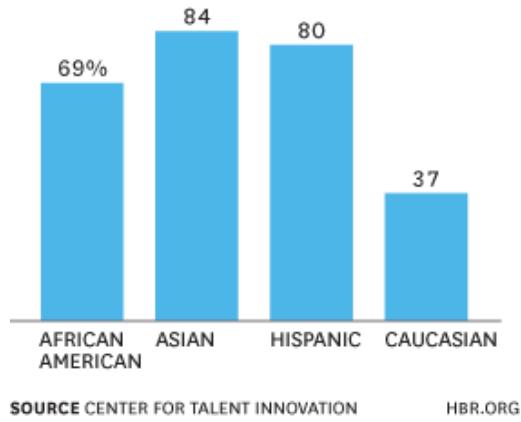
CTI research finds that professionals of color, like their Caucasian counterparts, prioritize gravitas over communication, and communication over appearance. Yet, "cracking the code" of executive presence presents unique challenges for professionals of color because standards of appropriate behavior, speech, and attire demand they suppress or sacrifice aspects of their cultural identity in

order to conform. They overwhelmingly feel that EP at their firm is based on white male standards — African Americans, especially, were 97% more likely than their Caucasian counterparts to agree with this assessment — and that conforming to these standards requires altering their authenticity, a new version of “bleached-out professionalism” that contributes to feelings of resentment and disengagement. People of color already feel they have to work harder than their Caucasian counterparts just to be perceived “on a par” with them; more than half (56%) of minority professionals also feel they are held to a stricter code of EP standards.



EP further eludes professionals of color because they’re not likely to get feedback on their “presentation of self.” Qualitative findings affirm that their superiors, most of whom are white, hesitate to call attention to gravitas shortfalls and/or communication blunders for fear of coming across as racially insensitive or discriminatory. While sponsors might close this gap, specifically addressing executive presence issues with their high-potentials, [CTI’s 2012 research](#) shows that professionals of color are much less likely to have a sponsor than Caucasians (8% versus 13%). When they do get feedback, they’re unclear as to how to act on it, particularly if they were born outside the U.S. — a serious problem for corporations who need local expertise to expand their influence in global markets.

**UNCLEAR ON HOW TO CORRECT ISSUES
RAISED BY FEEDBACK**



In short, because feedback is either absent, overly vague, or contradictory, executive presence remains an inscrutable set of rules for professionals of color — rules they’re judged by but cannot interpret and embody except at considerable cost to their authenticity. Consequently, in a workplace where unconscious bias continues to permeate the corridors of power, and leadership is mostly white and male, professionals of color are measurably disadvantaged in their efforts to be perceived as leaders.

As [America becomes](#) more diverse [at home](#) and its companies are increasingly engaged in the global marketplace, winning in today’s fiercely competitive economy requires a diverse workforce that “matches the market.” Such individuals are better attuned to the unmet needs of consumers or clients like themselves. [New research from CTI \(PDF\)](#) shows, however, that their insights need a key ingredient to reach full-scale implementation: a cadre of equally diverse leaders. Yet the power of difference is missing at the top, just when it matters most.

Editor’s note: We updated the headline and body of this post January 23. The original post referred to professionals of color as “multicultural professionals.” We regret having caused offense.

Sylvia Ann Hewlett is the founder and CEO of the Center for Talent Innovation and the founder of Hewlett Consulting Partners LLC.

N. Cornell Boggs III

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Toys “R” Us, Inc.



As Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Toys “R” Us, Inc., **Cornell Boggs** leads all legal, corporate governance and legislative matters for the company. He provides advice and counsel to the Leadership Team on a wide range of issues, including those focused on achieving the company’s growth objectives. Boggs is a key advocate for the Toys “R” Us brand, ensuring the company’s interests are represented in the many places around the globe where it does business. He also works closely with the Board of Directors in his position as Corporate Secretary and serves as a member of the company’s Global Leadership Team.

Boggs joined the company in 2017 from Dow Corning Corporation, where he served as senior vice president, general counsel, and corporate secretary. In that role, he oversaw teams in Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the U.S. and was responsible for Legal, Government Affairs, Compliance, and Ethics.

Prior to that, Boggs was chief responsibility and ethics officer for MillerCoors LLC, and group vice president and general counsel for the Coors Brewing Company. He also held senior level roles with major global companies including Tyco Plastics and Adhesives, Intel Corporation, Anheuser-Busch, and Monsanto, and spent two years with the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.

Boggs has Juris Doctorate and bachelor’s degree from Valparaiso University in Indiana. He serves on the boards of his alma mater, where he is Vice Chairman of the Audit Committee, as well as Thrivent Financial, a Fortune 500 financial services company. Boggs is also a member of the Executive Leadership Council, the preeminent membership organization committed to increasing the number of black executives in C-Suites, on corporate boards, and in global enterprises.

Kim C. D'Abreu

Principal Consultant, Diversity Dimensions Consulting & Leadership Coach, The Nebo Company



As a leadership coach, **Kim D'Abreu** enables leaders to clarify their values and make courageous moves toward their own development. She specializes in coaching executives and leaders through transitions. She helps her clients identify and break free from limiting behavior patterns so they can activate action plans for bold, professional change.

D'Abreu is passionate about the intersection of culture, identity, and traditional leadership competencies and customizes strategic solutions to support her clients' business and career success. She has helped guide company leadership in structurally incorporating diverse thinking and experience into their management and program philosophy. D'Abreu is an entrepreneurial, dynamic, and resourceful executive with 25 years of experience within the education, healthcare, and non-profit sectors, and a reputation for managing the culture and complexities of academic environments. She has effectively developed tools, strategies, and resources focused on climate improvement and cultural competency as a means to promote success of diverse groups.

D'Abreu has worked with major private philanthropic organizations including the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, California Endowment, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and academic medical centers including SUNY Downstate Medical Center and Columbia University Medical Center. D'Abreu is now a full-time consultant and her client list includes: the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, University of Pennsylvania, Association of Colleges of Nursing, Health Career Connection, Physician Education Association, and University of California, San Diego.

D'Abreu is a member of the International Coach Federation (ICF), Washington, D.C. chapter. She is certified in facilitation by the Leadership Strategies Institute. She obtained her Certificate in Leadership Coaching from Georgetown University and holds a Bachelor of Science degree from The Johns Hopkins University and a Master of Public Health degree from the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

As a New York transplant living in Washington, D.C., D'Abreu spends her spare time exploring the arts, and enjoying her daughter and two cats Brook & Lynn.

Katherine (Kate) Ebner

Principal, CEO, Executive Leadership Coach, and Organizational Consultant, The Nebo Company



Kate Ebner is a change leader, writer, business strategist, and leadership coach who is catalyzing conversations, forging connections, and creating opportunities to realize transformational change at this critical time in our history. She has spent the last two decades guiding change in corporations, educational institutions, non-profits, and associations—partnering with clients to realize transformational change by balancing her business and organizational expertise with her deep understanding of the human elements of leadership. Ebner's work is grounded in her core belief that “we are the leaders we've been waiting for.” In this spirit, she invites individuals from all walks of life to harness their creativity and talent and to call upon their best selves to focus on what matters most in their lives and at work.

Committed to encouraging the voices and leadership of women at work, at home, and in the world, Ebner is a founding partner of The Nebo Company and Nebo for Women, a program designed to transform the lives of women by sharing a new paradigm for working, leading, and living. In this capacity, Ebner leads retreats and special programs, using an innovative model for teaching women how to create shifts in their lives that ensure greater effectiveness and fulfillment.

Ebner is deeply committed to a peaceful and sustainable future. She has collaborated with Peace x Peace, The Soul of Money Institute, The Oneness-Family School, and other organizations dedicated to making a difference in the world. She and Partner Jan Kearce head the D.C. chapter of the Global Sufficiency Network, a national movement to help people live from sufficiency rather than scarcity.

In 2004, Ebner founded The Nebo Company with a vision of bringing innovative people, ideas, research, and methods together to crystallize visions for a better future and to make those visions real. Today, The Nebo Company continues to work for a peaceful and sustainable world by providing leadership development, coaching, and consulting services to leaders in the corporate, government, and non-profit sectors, as well as offerings for individuals and organizations who desire to design and step into a larger vision for their lives and work.

Ebner is a member of the faculty and a Co-Director of Georgetown University's Leadership Coaching Program, a renowned certification program for coaches that approaches leadership coaching from an organization development perspective. Ebner has created an innovative coaching model for working with professionals to help them improve their work/life balance, delegation, prioritization, and self-mastery. Called "Coaching for Leverage," this approach addresses the common struggle with work-life balance and the stresses that often plague high achievers. Ebner's work on this subject is published in *On Becoming A Leadership Coach, a Holistic Approach to Coaching Excellence*. In 2010, along with colleague Lloyd Raines, Ebner presented a model for "Coaching for Sustainability" at the International Coach Federation (ICF) annual conference.

Ebner was the host of *Visionary Leader, Extraordinary Life* on VoiceAmerica Business.

Ebner lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with her husband, two children, and their English shepherd, Nyx.

Susan (Susie) L. Lees

Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Allstate Insurance Company



Susie Lees is Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of The Allstate Corporation. She leads Allstate's 1,400-person legal team to guide the company's business strategy, ensure sound compliance, and foster a healthy legal, legislative, and regulatory environment.

Lees joined Allstate in 1988 and has moved up through the ranks, holding a variety of leadership positions with increasing responsibility, most notably in her previous role as senior vice president and deputy general counsel for Allstate Financial. During her extensive tenure at Allstate, Lees led a multitude of complex initiatives, including the company's acquisition of American Heritage Life Insurance Company. While leading the corporate law division of Allstate's law and regulation department, she gained extensive experience working with business areas throughout the corporation. Earlier in her career, Lees built a foundation of business acumen through professional sales roles at Celanese Corp. and Exxon Chemical.

She has been a champion of solutions to key societal issues and serves on The Allstate Foundation Board of Trustees. Lees also serves on the boards of the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the National Association of Women Lawyers, Rand Institute for Civil Justice, and the Institute for Legal Reform.

Lees holds an A.B. degree in political science from Brown University and a J.D. from the University of Oklahoma College of Law.

Lori L. Lorenzo

Program Director, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)



Lori L. Lorenzo is the proud mom of four kids: Amanda, 15; Mark, 12; Kyle, 9; and Ethan, 7. In her role with the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), she is responsible for supporting LCLD's efforts to promote diversity and inclusion among Member organizations, developing and managing LCLD's strategic programs, and promoting understanding of legal diversity issues generally.

Lorenzo has published several articles and is a frequent speaker on diversity with organizations including the American Bar Association, the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), and the Association for Legal Administrators, among others.

Lorenzo received her B.A. with honors from the University of Florida and her J.D. from Duke University School of Law. Before joining LCLD, her work experience included law practice in structured finance and securitization, small business ownerships (a martial arts company), and several years managing diversity initiatives for law schools.

Jorge A. Mestre

Managing Partner, Rivero Mestre LLP



Jorge Mestre is the Managing Partner of Rivero Mestre LLP. He engages exclusively in a commercial litigation practice, including international arbitration and litigation. In *Chambers USA*, he has been praised for "his strategic sense and creative thinking in critical litigation matters" and characterized as "a brilliant litigator with the creative edge; he sees a tactical advantage in what seems like an intractable problem."

Among his many high-stakes matters, Mestre successfully represented a Chevron attorney in a case that was part of the \$100 billion, 18-year litigation over Chevron's alleged environmental damage in the Amazon. Rivero Mestre was honored by *The American Lawyer* as a winner of a Global Legal Award in the category of Global Dispute of the Year: U.S. Fraud Litigation, for its work on the case. As part of the defense, a series of U.S. discovery proceedings were commenced that ultimately resulted in the Second Circuit ordering the production of more than 600 hours of outtakes (the most ever to be ordered in U.S. history) from *Crude*—a film about the litigation. *The Wall Street Journal* has called the case the "Legal Fraud of the Century."

A seasoned practitioner, Mestre has litigated cases through trial in both federal district court and Florida state court and has handled appeals before numerous state and federal courts. What's more, Mestre has litigated domestic and international arbitration matters in both English and Spanish, including an arbitration victory in Spanish. He has served as a party-appointed arbitrator in cases administered by the International Chamber of Commerce, American Arbitration Association, International Center for Dispute Resolution, and an ad hoc international arbitration—experiences that give him a valuable understanding of how arbitration tribunals work. Reflecting the excellent reputation he enjoys in the community, Florida state-court judges have appointed Mestre as a Receiver and as an

Assignee for the Benefit of Creditors.

Knowing that the rules of civil procedure are fundamental to his litigation practice, Mestre served on both the Florida Bar's Civil Procedure Rules Committee and its Federal Rules Standing Committee. As an example of his many publications, he has authored several chapters in *The Florida Bar's Civil Practice Before Trial Manual—Jurisdiction* (four times); *Injunctions* (twice); *Third-Party Practice* (twice); *Comparative Fault* (twice); and *Settlement* (once). He has served in various leadership positions within the American Bar Association and is a member of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic National Bar Foundation. He is a member of the bars of Florida, New York, Washington, D.C., and many federal courts.

Mestre earned an LL.M. in securities and financial regulation, with distinction, from the Georgetown University Law Center. He earned his J.D., *cum laude*, from Florida State University School of Law, where he served as the articles and notes editor of the *Journal of Land Use and Environmental Law*, and received the Local Government Law Book Award. Mestre earned his B.A. in financial management from the Catholic University of America.

Jodi J. Schwartz

Partner, Tax, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz



Jodi J. Schwartz focuses on the tax aspects of corporate transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures, spin-offs, and financial instruments. Schwartz has been the principal tax lawyer on numerous domestic and cross-border transactions in a wide range of industries. She was elected Partner in 1990.

Schwartz received her B.S. in economics *magna cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania in 1981, her M.B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania (Wharton School) in 1984, her J.D. *magna cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1984, and her LL.M. in taxation from the New York University Law School in 1987.

Schwartz is recognized as one of the world's leading lawyers in the field of taxation, including being selected by *Chambers Global Guide to the World's Leading Lawyers*, *Chambers USA Guide to America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, *International Who's Who of Business Lawyers*, and as a tax expert by Euromoney Institutional Investor Expert Guides. In addition, she is a member of the Executive Committee and past chair of the Tax Section of the New York State Bar Association, and also is a member of the American College of Tax Counsel.

Schwartz serves on the board of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services, the Jewish Community Project of Lower Manhattan, and serves on the Board of Overseers of the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Schwartz lives in Manhattan with her husband, son, and daughter.



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