

Speaker 1:

Diversity equity and inclusion is important to us as a firm because it's part of our DNA woven into the fabric of the firm. Greenberg charts supports out leadership because our missions are aligned. Diversity enables us to provide our clients with a broader range of perspectives, culture and creativity. When Todd approached me with the possibility of doing the summit, you know, I decided to go to the CEO directly to Richard Rosenbaum. Yeah. And he came to me and he said, would you guys be interested in sponsoring this in about three seconds? Literally they said, come in. And Richard really sets the tone from the top down, raising awareness and showing CEOs what a powerful effect they have on the rest of the organization. I cannot tell you how much it meant to the LGBT lawyers at Greenberg that we sponsored this event. We always go back to kind of the core values of the fund.

Speaker 1:

And we try to align those core values with our investments. And, uh, leadership is something that speaks to all of those corridors to be able to go and love and have kids and be married to whoever you want to and not be hurt physically or legally simply because of who you are is something we've always understood as, as a, from, from the first days we were from, I prayed that before I leave this earth, that I will see some semblance of equality. And to see that sinless, I think leaders are going to have to demand the assist upon change as a leader at Greenberg Traurig. If I believe in the concept of diversity and inclusion, it can't be enough just to say those things. You have to do those things by being involved in the organizations that provide access to the LGBT community. Each of us has the ability. Each of us realize that we have the obligation to drive change. Let's lead in a way that embraces the unique opportunity to change. You're on the wrong side of his, if you don't support every efforts to equalize and make it okay to be who you are at Greenberg chart, we hold the optimism that our society is changing for the better, and we are going to be part of that change.

Speaker 2:

Hi everybody. Thanks for joining us today. I know you all have very busy days and hopefully our two-part panel will be very exciting and worth your time. My name's John Richards, I'm the shareholder at Greenberg Traurig, and I want to thank, uh, out leadership, uh, the panelists that we have today that I'll be introducing shortly. Uh, and everybody who is participating, I was asked to make a few opening remarks and given that it's pride month and having just watched the video, and hopefully I have not aged too much in the seven years since, uh, that quote, I, uh, I wanted to take a second to share with you all personally, why I'm so proud to call GT on my home and family. And you're a lawyer and we work long hours and it can be very challenging and not every day is perfect, but I can't imagine wanting to work anywhere else.

Speaker 2:

And a lot of times lawyers are most proud of the work they do. And you could sit and talk about accolades and recognition and the global path platform that my team uses, uh, to service clients, uh, around the world and meet business needs. But what really makes me proud and hopefully the video words really can't do a justice cause it's a feeling is how we do it and being part of diverse teams where each of us service our clients openly, honestly, and authentically. And that is not something that I've always personally been able to do. And GT has created the environment, uh, to thrive and succeed because the firm to me really gets, and it's proof positive. It's not just about an equitable opportunity to work at a law firm and then recruit diverse lawyers to work with you. But it's about the inclusion to benefit from the full aspects of diversity.

Speaker 2:

So myself and other diverse attorneys feel heard and welcomed and valued. And we sit here today with the number one number of black attorneys of any law firm in the U S but also partners. Number one, the number of Hispanic attorneys in the us, but also partners number two, and the number of LGBTQ plus attorneys in the United States and 42% of our executive committee being diverse. So the fact that diverse lawyers, uh, thrive here, uh, has really, uh, my real source of pride in what I am proud of. And while I'm so excited about this first panel, uh, today, uh, and I want to bring the panelists onto the stage so I can introduce them, uh, together. They are friends, clients, mentors, mentees, but leaders in their respective organizations who have driven and are driving diversity, equity and inclusion in their places of work in the markets in which they operate.

Speaker 2:

So I'm really excited to have each of them here today. Uh, I first want to introduce, and I'll go around, uh, introduce each of them. And then we'll tee up the first question we have Gabrielle by Gabby Royal Royal, who is global director of diversity and inclusion at Abercrombie and Fitch, Edwin Hopkins Gillespie, who is director of employment practices at legal us and Greg Morley, who is global head of equity and inclusion, ammo at Hennessy, and also oversees HR in the Asia region. I had the opportunity to talk to Gabby and talk to Edwin and Greg before the panel and listened to their observations and the success that they've had in their careers and their various organizations. And one common theme between each of them was they all really understood the importance of knowing your organization and knowing your investors, your leadership, your management, your employees, and also understanding who your customers are. So I thought that would be a logical place to start beginning with Edwin, who can tell us a little bit about their journey and how he's led it, uh, on D and I, and how he has been successful, uh, to beginning to effectuate a change both individually and at the organizational level. I'd love to turn it over to Edwin and, and hear your thoughts.

Speaker 3:

All right. Thank you very much, John. And first I want to make sure that I think you and think Kelly, and think out leadership for putting this panel together today. And I've luckily had a chance to look at some of the bios of the other panelists. And I know that for me personally, I'm going to learn a lot just from everyone on this panel. So very humbled by that. I also want to just say briefly that I am speaking on my own behalf and not on the behalf of legal. So the views expressed here are my own and do not necessarily reflect their views. Um, as lawyers, we got to get that little disclaimer out there, but I do want to begin by telling you a little bit about Lido, because I mean, there's a lot of people on this call and, uh, many of you may have never even heard the word legal before, but legal is a grocery store.

Speaker 3:

We're part of an organization called the sports group, which is actually the fourth largest retailer in the world, um, headquartered in Germany, but it's in like 30 countries. And so we are new here, the United States, and we opened our first us store in 2017. So when I talk about Leetal and our DEI journey, we're really very early in our journey. And I think that's one of the reasons why John had asked me, um, to speak on this panel is because we can kind of give you a different flavor for what we as a business have been experiencing and kind of how our path is maybe a little bit different than businesses that have been operating longer in the United States. So I did join Leetal in 2016 and luckily legal had the foresight to actually have a DNI function in 2016. But I think, and when I say this, I don't really mean this flippantly.

Speaker 3:

Um, our goal at that time was to open stores. So while DNI was always there and it was always something that was important, we still needed to build a successful business. And so I think we did all the things that you're supposedly supposed to do when it comes to DNI. But I think what really kind of turbo-charged our D and I journey was that political unrest and social justice movement from 2020. And it hit us pretty deeply, um, at legal us because our headquarters is in the Washington DC Metro area. So we were right at the center of everything that was going on in the country, um, with the deaths of, of George Floyd, Ahmad Aubriana Taylor, I mean, it really impacted us as a business. And there was a lot of pressure, both internal and external with putting out statements, making proclamations donations and while legal did, you know, send out messages, say that black lives matter.

Speaker 3:

Um, we also said that we don't want to just pay lip service to this. Like, we want to make sure that whatever it is that we do is going to resonate with our workforce. And so what we did was we put together a culture survey. We wanted to find out where do we stand right now as a business, because I firmly believe that you can't really figure out where you want to go until, you know, where you are. So we said, okay, let's put a line in the sand and figure out where do we stand as a business? So we sent out that survey so we could find out how employees felt when it came to diversity and inclusion in the workforce. Um, because our ultimate goal was to have a workforce where everybody can bring their whole selves to work, because that's really what it's all about.

Speaker 3:

And I've been in situations and in other positions where maybe I've, I've covered, I haven't brought my full self to work. And I think that impacts performance as well. Um, so after we did the survey, we made the results public and to our company. And I think that's key as well because sometimes companies do these surveys and they don't give you all the data. It was very clear from our board of directors that we want to make sure that everyone had these results. And then we wanted to hear directly from our employees. So we did listening. And I can tell you that we had some very tough conversations with our employees, but it was good because we were talking about thoughts and feelings that may be people had buried or covered in the workforce. Um, also we'd started doing training. So it was very important for us to start from the top, um, because I firmly believe that if you don't have that, buy-in from the top of your organization, your D I strategy is not going to work.

Speaker 3:

You've got to have them there with you. And so that was something that we thought was a key part of our DEI strategy. And then we also affirmed formed our first business employee resource group. And originally it was called an ERG, but we added the business there for a specific reason because we want these groups to add to the business. We want them to see us be seen as a partner in the business. Um, from the customer side, we've been doing a lot of research when it comes to supplier diversity and discovering kind of what potential products could be featured in our stores, um, that have a diverse, um, flavor to them. And I think overall, I think when thinking about this topic, um, you know, we're trying to move our business from looking at this from just an HR or compliance, or even a legal topic to a topic that is for everyone in the business.

Speaker 3:

So I think John overall, I think to, to kind of answer your question, that internal buy-in for us came through having these hard discussions. Um, it came through, you know, we just did a panel, um, just last February, um, where we had African-American leaders in the business that discussed their experiences, not only working at Leedle, but working in the working world, just in general. And I think that was really eyeopening for people who attended just like when people saw George Floyd's murder, that really impacts seeing it firsthand. I think that was one way we were kind of able to kind of lead people on the right path, um, on the customer side, you know, I think there's really a lot of pressure going on from the outside. Customers are now making their decisions based on your commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. I think corporate social responsibility also plays a key role, especially when you look at the millennial generation and gen Z, because it's not just about who has the cheapest price or who has the coolest products people are looking at, how are you contributing to society?

Speaker 3:

And I see that also on the employee side as well. I saw a survey recently that said that it was like 60 some percent of employees when they looked at another job, they're looking to find out what is that company's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion and inclusion and customers are doing the same thing. And so I think from my perspective, just to close out here at Leetal, I think, you know, we've really been able to kind of understand that. And I think that's why we've been able to make progress on this front, uh, by no means am I to say

Speaker 2:

That we are anywhere near what I think some of my colleagues on this panel where they're at or where even some of the people who are attending your businesses are at like, they've been around for 20, 30 years. Uh, but I am very proud of kind of what we've just been able to accomplish over the last two years. Things that went in this panel can't do that justice. Cause everything you said, I could follow up with seven questions and we'll try to answer some of them through the dialogue with Gabby and Greg and, and go back to them. But to the extent that they're not covered, but you said some things at the end, uh, with respect to customers, which I think helps me pivot to Gabby as a global director of DNI for Abercrombie and Fitch and its brands, Abercrombie has become, uh, one of the most inclusive, uh, diverse, uh, brands, uh, as of late and has rebounded considerably. And I was very interested having talked to Gabby to sharing some of her experiences in, in achieving that success with Abercrombie, from the vantage point of how she has worked to audit, understand the global customer and respond accordingly. I've got a few questions for Gabby, but if you could start there, that would, that would be great.

Speaker 4:

Thank you, John. Um, yeah, first of all, thanks, thanks to the panelists. Thanks to our leadership. Um, thank you, Kelly, also for your support in setting this up, um, and for the opportunity to represent a Abercrombie and Fitch and happy pride to everyone. Um, you know, I thought about this question a lot, John, and, you know, uh, when preparing for this conversation today, I'm thinking a lot about internal change and how it's reflected in the way that we're showing up for our customers. It's not just reflected internally, but what we're doing internally as reflected externally our commitment, the investments organizations are making, um, organizations. We support really walking the walk and not just following a hashtag trends, right to Edward's point rejecting, performative allyship. And so I think as a brand, one of the things that I was acutely aware of and focused on coming in as a diversity practitioner and my background is diversity as a diversity educator and strategist.

Speaker 4:

And I've been at this for more than a decade. And in very personally and professionally like invested in this, um, idea of, you know, not coming into an organization that, um, you know, is performative in nature by, by, by any, any, any sense of the imagination. Um, because of the intersections of identities that I hold as a person of color, um, as a and lesbian person, as a masculine presenting person, cisgender woman, so many intersections, I've worked many places, different industries, and I've seen a lot as a diversity practitioner, but it was important for me to come into the organization and to do an audit. One of the things that we did was, you know, we did a lot of listening, John, a lot of listening, a lot of learning, a lot of unlearning, a lot of reflection in the mirror and saying, Hey, we want to show up, um, to produce products that authentically represent our global customer.

Speaker 4:

And that means that everything from working with influencers who are part of the community, if we're talking about our, um, our pride capsule collections, bringing in people, you know, from our associate resource groups that we recently launched, um, to support, you know, our product and designing our product to show up in the most authentic and real way for the communities that we were representing. And just to foster that great, a greater sense of equity and really holding ourselves accountable to show up the right way and to support the right organizations, to propel us forward and to really be leaders in this space and not just followers, which means that you have to go beyond checking the boxes beyond just changing a banner or a profile picture during the month of June, right? It is an always on effort to foster equity and inclusion to show up for our customer in that way and to really live our values. And so that was something that was very, very important to me as I went through the initial audit when I joined ANF was just to really understand where we were on that journey and where we're looking to go and where we're looking to go is not the same. And F is today where we're going, is going to be showing up as leaders in the industry and being very unapologetic in that stance to commit to those communities and to commit to folks who have historically been underrepresented across the, across the fashion industry.

Speaker 2:

I think you make a really important, powerful point. And maybe if you're willing to elaborate on it, one of the things about the LGBTQ community that I always try to focus on that's unique is we do transcend race and religion and gender and national origin. And we sometimes are as out there as vulnerable as we want to present ourselves and have to be a voice for others. And I try to do that in the context of otherwise being a white man, uh, who is also gay. How, how have you, and how has ANF, uh, and the brands really, and I think successfully are seeing intersectionality in display in that, whether it is through models or products or accessories in showing your consumer, that you understand, uh, those identities and they come together in, in what you bring.

Speaker 4:

I think it first just starts again with a lot of the internal work we've done to translate externally to the type of brand that we and values that we stand for as an organization. So I think as it relates to some of our capsule collections and products, I believe it's been well received by our customer. We understand that diversity is a spectrum. So when you have folks out in the audience are like, okay, like diversity, great. It's just focused on hiring and representation. That's incorrect, right? Diversity being deeply embedded and integrated into our brands and working across our brands to make sure that we are, um, you know, again, rejecting performative allyship that we are, that we are aware of any cultural

sensitivities or nuances as it relates to the design. And it relates to the product and our campaigns as well. So diversity is a spectrum, and we're not going to stop again until we're able to exceed that goal of cultivating and fostering the most inclusive shopping experiences and products possible that really reflect those values.

Speaker 4:

Um, another thing I'll say is, um, I think customers are kind of like picking up on these cues of our internal work that's being done and it's reflected externally and received positively because customers have been very complimentary of even our most recent collections. We've got our 20, 21. I should've, I should've worn it today, but I figured all the lawyers will be in suits and, you know, button-downs, but we just really start, you know, 20, 21, um, capsule collection. And you'll notice even from our website, you know, thinking about the intentionality, but to find the design, which pride flags are we are we using? Right. So the progress flag, that's more inclusive of our BiPAP communities, black indigenous people of color who are also part of the communities like myself, our trans and non-binary communities, right? Thinking about the intentionality behind that design and what cues we are sending out to customers that say, they understand what's happening.

Speaker 4:

They understand that the spectrum is more broad and they're being inclusive. And, um, we're able to represent that in an authentic way. Um, another piece is kind of like partnering with influencers and models that are actually from the community, not just choosing random, you know, models with people who are actually from the community, um, working with organizations like the Trevor project and glisten to co-create and co-design these products, um, you know, even on her website, uh, putting something simple as like put out of your pronouns, like to the influencers, right in the models that are wearing the product, like their pronouns are also like included. So those are like subtle cues, or maybe not so subtle, but those are cues to our customer that, you know, we're, it goes beyond kind of like rainbow washing. It goes beyond just, uh, just a t-shirt, what we're doing is more than a t-shirt and we're, we're really working, um, to showcase that diversity is literally woven into our product and the way that we're showing up for customers each and every day,

Speaker 2:

I'm going to follow up with you to learn all of these terms. I'm making my list performative allyship and rainbow washing, but I think you've been really, really great points. And again, it, it, it is challenging because I have about nine follow-up questions for you. I'm going to go to Greg first and then hopefully we can all loop back together. And so everybody that is listening to kind of give you a sense of where my mind was when we were putting the panel together, the value that Edwin spoke to about accompany, being new in the U S and how large it was, and Gabby working for a public company under, under various brands and all of the work that she's done in the external marketplace and seeing how the internal works reflected. I thought Greg really was uniquely positioned as well, uh, to add to this conversation in the context of running a diversity equity and inclusion globally for a company under various brands where it's not just understanding like your, your organization and where it is on that journey, but where the various brands are in that journey, to the extent that you merged are in different places and how you tackled that and are tackling that.

Speaker 2:

And the success you achieved, I think is very instructive that I was hoping that you could take some time to walk through that journey and in that merger, if you will.

Speaker 5:

Sure. And thanks, uh, I'll have my thanks to everyone out leadership and John for putting it together, a great structure for us to have today. And thanks for Kelly for, um, making me seem, uh, technologically savvy. Um, and, and I love panels like this, cause I'm learning so much from, uh, from Gabby and Edwin. So thanks to both of you as well. Um, the, the, the journey that, uh, LVMH and specifically at MCL talk about, I'd like to say that we started out and we were really super smart about it, but we weren't. And I think what we were smart about was we needed to learn, and we ended up really learning from our employees. And one of the truly interesting aspects of diversity equity and inclusion is when you put it in the hands of the consumers, you put it in the hands of your employees and your partners.

Speaker 5:

You don't actually know where it's going to go, and you have maybe some idea of where this effort's going to go. And it started for us with a, a cultural change. We had a relatively new CEO, he came in, he wanted to have a better purpose and mission and values for the organization. And so during that process, we started to have much more transparent conversations with employees about values and what was important to them. Why were they there? Why were they staying? Why were they leaving or thinking about leaving? And from those workshops, two things came out most strongly globally. Uh, and those two things were what is our commitment as a company to sustainability and social responsibility, and what is our commitment as a company? And this company is not diverse and equitable inclusive enough. So those were two things that, uh, I would, I would guess most senior management didn't want to hear, uh, but they heard it.

Speaker 5:

And there was an intention to continue to listen to the organization. And from that was born, uh, our diversity equity and inclusion journey specifically in mode Hennessy. Now we were quite fortunate in Moët Hennessy that LVMH had already been on the journey for quite some time and had started to build a language and a competence in the organization. I would say melon Hennessy was relatively less progressive as an organization, um, partly by the nature of our organization and partly by the nature of the business that we're in. And, uh, we started on the journey as many organizations did down the unconscious bias route. So we started to train everybody on unconscious bias. Uh, we had a lot of, uh, advocate from the senior management, especially from the CEO. And I'm a big believer as well that the CEO has to lead. Uh, because if, if the senior management doesn't lead, it's very difficult to push this effort up the hill.

Speaker 5:

And so we were on the path of, uh, unconscious bias. We're building a language and then COVID hit. And so to us, it was a bit of a, well, we can't do training in person. We can't do unconscious bias. So I have to put this on hold because no one could ever imagine attending a training class virtually at that point. So we put it on hold and then, um, June happened and it was like suddenly COVID and, uh, the racial justice movement accelerated, and also it accelerated our efforts, but it also amplified our problems. Uh, and so it was, uh, in a way, very fortunate that we had those two things, because it was a bit of a kick for us to say, okay, we have to really amplify this and we really have to put some, some effort next to it. So within about six weeks, we had a global leadership team in place.

Speaker 5:

We were starting to build a strategy that was a meaningful strategy, not just a training program. And we had started to roll that out. And since then, we've been able to, uh, develop employee resource groups around the company. Uh, we're working now with the marketing team on developing toolkits for the marketers to be able to select the right partners, talent, activations, uh, and customer, uh, partners. So we've come a long way quickly. It's unfortunate the things that happened to accelerate it, but they happened. And we've, I think been able to take advantage of those things and come out, uh, really moving quickly. And one of the things that's so interesting again, about discussion, like this is the speed at which this movement is going now is really impressive. And I keep telling our own organization, we feel good because we seem like we're making progress, but we're, you know, we're running very slowly when others are running very quickly. And I feel that again on this panel with, uh, with, uh, Edwin and Gabby, and they makes me, gives me even more pressure to keep moving with our organization, keep lighting fires around the organization to move fast.

Speaker 2:

I appreciate, uh, those thoughts. I'm trying to show more energy to everyone always says I'm too slow and I don't want things done. Um, listening to what everybody said, I kind of would love to go back to a few points because you all made them in different ways and perhaps we can go through them and it'll touch back to a couple of points that were made before you just made the comment, Greg, a quote, like the business that we are in. And to me, when you're thinking about a global customer, the questions you may be asking are, what, what do you sell? Where do you sell it? And to whom I want to take a minute to focus on the where, because all of you in your capacities, uh, in global roles, or even Edwin you're in the U S operating as part of a large, uh, global retail company, uh, especially throughout, uh, parts of Europe and in Eastern Europe, how do you all in your roles and you think about effectuating individual change and organizational change grapple with both the employee who is LGBTQ that is nervous or feels unsafe because of the society where they live and where your company operates.

Speaker 2:

Uh, it could be something as drastic as it's criminal, uh, to go to jail, uh, potentially be killed. And I like to know more about that, that particular dynamic. And what messaging are you trying to have your leader send when they're in those regions where perhaps it's not otherwise as accepted and, and frankly, uh, in, in the states itself, um, when there's been a big resistance as of late, at least legislatively to the trans community. So whoever would like to, uh, to start with that on maybe Greg, if you want to continue on because of your presence in Asia, uh, and then Gabby and Edwin, that would be great.

Speaker 5:

Yeah. I'll tell you a little bit about how this, uh, cultural transformation started and then where it's ended up in, uh, and I'll, I'll use Malaysia as an example because Malaysia is a relatively conservative, uh, Muslim country. And, uh, even for the business we're in, which is a wines and spirits business, it's a difficult place sometimes to do business. So we started with this, uh, concept of, uh, no taboo where basically employees could ask managers anything. Uh, and that's how we started to open up the, the, the dialogue with employees, but it was done still around a values basis. So we were talking about the values that we, we believe were important in our organization and that we were true to in the organization. Um, and from those discussions, again, came up these topics of social responsibility, uh, uh, diversity inclusion, but other things just about workplace environment.



Speaker 5:

And when employees started to see that the management were actually going to answer their questions, they were going to be real and authentic and not give any kind of a company line anymore. Then they really started to ask genuine questions. So it became a bit of a give and take with the employees and why I use Malaysia as an example. So I attended one of these no taboo sessions in Malaysia, the first one, and it was a bordered on hostile, uh, because the employees just did not feel like the management had been real with them. And in that session, the management app made some statements and some, some replies to questions and they were authentic and real. And it was, I think for the first time employees felt like, wow, these people are really playing the game. Uh, and since that time they started to have a dialogue sessions about women empowerment.

Speaker 5:

Uh, they've had dialogue sessions about LGBTQ. Now. That's not something that's very usual in Malaysia, but they've created a safe environment at the workplace. And, um, so much so that recently, uh, every year Don Perron yall does an activation with a celebrity. And this year it's with lady Gaga and lady Gaga also is very supportive of born this way foundation. And through our relationship with lady Gaga, we're also have a relationship with born this way. And the, uh, brand manager who leads the don't pair in and business was communicating to the whole Malaysia team saying about why she was so proud to work for the company, because we had this relationship with dome pair and y'all, she came out in this email to the employees as LGBT, and then, uh, as a relation to this, uh, born this way foundation. So it was an incredible moment of seeing how an organization can transform itself and create a safe space.

Speaker 5:

Could she go out with her family, friends outside of the workplace? I have talked with her since, and she said, not really, she's not comfortable having that discussion being out in outside of the workplace, but she is at work. So regardless of what the law looks out, looks like past the receptionist desk or what the family environment is. If the people that work for us can come in and feel like work's a safe place, then, uh, that's our responsibility and obligation. They can then be their best at work and we can try to chip away if the community, uh,

Speaker 2:

Piece by piece. Yeah, that's very powerful, um, story and experience. And it's interesting because it was in a way, like there's a juxtaposition with the United States, that there was a time where you could get married outside of work and then to work and be fired for getting married and being gay, uh, outside of work. So, uh, there, there is, it plays out in different ways that Gabby or Edwin have you all had kind of what has been your experience in everything we discussed in the D and I space when you're operating, whether it's brand or customer, uh, in a location, uh, that, that tends to be more hostile towards these efforts.

Speaker 4:

Yeah. I'd be happy to hop in. I mean, look, I think across our, all of our industries, there's still a lot of work to be done. I think we can all agree on that, that there are still cultural sensitivities and nuances globally that we're aware of, that we have to navigate as organizations, um, at ANF, you know, really our values remain the same. We work to promote, you know, especially from a workplace inclusive perspective, the most accessible, diverse, equitable workplace possible where all of our associates first

and foremost feel safe and of course, feel that sense of belonging, right. So that they don't have to like hide pieces of themselves as they go into work. Right. So, um, you know, there's a lot of work still to be done across all of our industries. Um, we recognize that everyone holds unique perspectives and worldviews, especially as we're navigating this third global lens, we're still committed to celebrating individuality and built in, in building compassion for each other and communities that are, that have been historically disenfranchised and going through super tough times around the world, especially as it relates to LGBTQ plus topics.

Speaker 4:

Um, but really our mission is to continue to amplify and engage and empower our associates to bring themselves authentically into the space and thinking about safety first. So we want to, of course, you know, avoid offending, you know, customers, especially from a religious perspective, particularly like, as we're talking about, um, you know, regionally, you know, in the middle east, as well as protecting our, you know, our associates from any adverse interactions or, or law enforcement, um, you know, we, we work to review and approve images, you know, the imagery that's going out in stores, the marketing that we're using, the products, um, you know, domestically to date. I think it's one of the questions in the chat was just kind of like around how do we ensure that we're embracing like pride year round? And it becomes interesting, we're talking about our partners from across the world.

Speaker 4:

Um, but I can say that you cannot look at the investments that are being made by organizations to understand their alignment with values, their core values. And so today, by example, by way of example, you know, we, we have a long-term and sustained partnership with the Trevor project. For example, we've donated over \$2 million to the Trevor project and we continue to support them, support organizations like glisten, others that are working to kind of break the stigma and, uh, working to support and champion for LGBTQ, uh, individuals. Um, we have local activations in Columbus where, you know, you Albany Columbus, where our headquarters is located, um, where we have investments made Stonewall Columbus has won many local activations that we're making just to continue to champion this progress. Um, we have, as I said before, our associate resource groups, so we have associates globally who are part of our pride ARGs as we call them associate resource groups, continue to put their foot on the gas, to bring these topics up in the workplace to create a more inclusive environment.

Speaker 4:

So it's not that we're just talking about some of these things in the month of June, but we're talking about them as a year round effort. And we're walking hand in hand to be vocal change agents across the organization to make sure that, that our values cut through to not only our external customers, but internal customers as well. So through the investments, through creating and promoting safe safety, a safe space and environment for LGBTQ associates and allies, um, to even, you know, the product that we're rolling out and co-creating with partners like the Trevor project listening amongst others,

Speaker 2:

And, uh, to compliment each of you, your roles as well, right? Because when you have platforms like out leadership, uh, or yourself in this role, or your ability that you maximize with, with models and, uh, accessories humanizing through visuals and through people, uh, who we are, I think it makes that conversation so much easier. Uh, and our law firm we're in around the world in 11 countries. We don't send out certain messages to some employees and other messages to other employees, depending on

the country you're in, you're promoting values that transcend, and it becomes so normalized people. Don't I always tell people sometimes like, you can be so LGBT, like you're not anymore because it's just so normal. You're not thinking about it in that way. And it's an integrated piece of your work. I, um, I want to ask Edwin kind of going off of this topic, but back to something that he had said before, to the extent that you can comment, uh, in your own capacity is a lot of lawyers who are listening in and myself working, uh, in partnering with retailers, when they hear things like employee focus, groups, surveys, employees speaking up, they become very nervous because they think, well, here's going to be a complaint and we're going to have a duty to investigate, and then there'll be retaliation.

Speaker 2:

And I always try to say like, when people speak up, maybe it's a sign of strength and wouldn't you want to hear from them now then three years later after they no longer work here, but, but that's a natural reaction. So I was curious to the extent that you Edwin or new one can comment, is there that uptick, do we view that as, uh, a good thing, uh, that fine? What is the consequence of giving employees, uh, that, that voice and ultimately, how does that level out? Yeah. Thank you, John. I would say that that is always a concern for us with the legal hat on, but I, I agree with you. I think that from my perspective, I'd rather know what the, what the issues are so that we can do something about it than not know and find out when you get an EOC charge or you get a lawsuit or a litigation of some kind.

Speaker 2:

Um, it is a little bit nervous though. I mean, when we did the culture survey and we also do an exit survey, so if someone voluntarily leaves the company, they have an opportunity to fill out our exit survey and they can leave comments. And sometimes those comments could potentially lead to something that might need to be investigated. So I think always making sure that legal is involved in some way so that you have an opportunity to look at those comments, because I, in my role and in, sorry, if I'm getting too much detail here, but we also, we also handle investigations as well. So if there's complaints of harassment, discrimination and retaliation, my team handles those complaints. So that's something that they would look into. And so to me, you're doing your business with service by making sure that you are taking care of those things and looking into them rather than just getting the information it sits there.

Speaker 2:

And then later on you get a lawsuit and you find out like, oh yeah, we had this information, but we didn't do anything about it. So I definitely think that it's best to know than to not know. And I always kind of boil it down sometimes more simply, most people don't want to do something adverse to their employer when their employee listens to them and hears them and feels that they're going to be heard. And that there's a response. Maybe it's not necessarily what the employee wanted to have happen, but they saw an engagement and a genuine desire, uh, for, for their employer, uh, to learn, uh, Gabby or Greg. Do you have any, any thoughts or comments on that? Especially a no taboo, Greg, that anything goes, I don't know if there are any parameters around what could or could not be asked, but if you all have any, any thoughts, quite inventive in the way they designed it, when it was, and this was done in every country and every place all around the world. And when you stood up, but to do a question and answer, they were to ask the questions were all anonymous, but every other employee got a green paddle

Speaker 5:

And the green paddle, you couldn't answer. If you didn't like the answer, you could only answer if it wasn't answered. So oftentimes employees could say, well, no, you didn't answer the question. So it was about holding management accountable. Um, there's always the, of course the risk that you're going to hear something you don't hear or discover something that you hoped hadn't been there. But that to me is the difference between slapping a pride flag on your signature line and actually believing inequity in the work and justice in the workplace. And, you know, you have to do some things that don't feel good. Sometimes you have to sometimes deal with, you know, people that are toxic in the environment that maybe you wouldn't have because you didn't have listening posts or you didn't have dialogue, or you didn't have transparency. So I would much rather know than not know.

Speaker 5:

And that's the commitment. We have real with people. And if we are, uh, wherever they are around the world, uh, and then people see that we act on what they say, and we're really hearing that instead of just playing lip service to them, and those people will be committed. I think they'll be committed to us. It's very similar to the way companies, I think have treated people during COVID and those companies that committed to their employees made me progress along the diversity equity, inclusion journey, and me progress along the justice journey. I think that that's where employees will have really built loyalty with their, with their employers. I hope that that's what we'll see. And it'll be the nature I believe it is. And you start to see that as we come out of the other side of this is

Speaker 2:

And ask, uh, the one piece that I always think about COVID that may not be intuitive to somebody who's not a part of the LGBTQ community, is that the virtual reality that we're all probably have fatigue from participating in really required LGBT employees in some instances to open up their life in their personal lives and their home, and there's pictures of spouses or their children are running across the screen. And all of a sudden they're sharing so much more with their employer that perhaps they had covered up at work. And sometimes people don't think about that, but that in of itself, I think was a great exercise in people maybe even feeling safe as well, because I'm on a screen, but I can show you a little more about me. So then when I come back to work after COVID, I can take that picture and put it on my desk, just like all of my other counterparts do. So I'm hopeful in that respect, I, before I kind of end with some Latin, my last question, Gabby, you have anything that you want to add, uh, to Greg and Edwin's thoughts about increasing employee engagement or,

Speaker 4:

Yeah, I mean, I'll just say very briefly. I mean, Greg and Edwin, you know, just major mic drop moments, you know, hit it out the park. But I just like to say that from an A and F perspective, you know, our most valuable assets are our people and our culture. And so we, we have a speaker, we promote a speak up culture. We have a chief ethics and compliance officer and team, um, that encourage this and we want to hear from our associates. So we want to really co-create that environment where people won't fear any form of retaliation. Um, and then particularly from an HR and diversity perspective, I'm pretty keen on understanding exit surveys. You know, I want to understand why people leave. Why are you, you know, w uh, what we can do to create a more inclusive and equitable environment where people want to stay, and they feel that genuine sense of belonging that we've been discussing all day. So I'm as interested and passionate as we are about the recruiting side of the house. We have to equally be as invested in focusing on our talent management processes and working to, uh, put, put measures in place for people to want to stay and to build that community, build that sense of belonging, and then

also take moments to reflect in the mirror and kind of understand, all right, if people are leaving, why is that? And what can we do to create a better infrastructure where people want to stay?

Speaker 2:

I think that's excellent. I want to answer one, one question, a little easier to do it that way. And then, and then finish with some final thoughts. A couple of questions that have come across the screen is I applaud the efforts organizationally with D and I, but how do you translate those efforts down to frontline management or in the grocery store, the boutique in the mall? And one of the things that I, I personally do and we do is figure out how do you translate these issues, uh, into situations. So your managers can spot what discrimination and retaliation and harassment is respond properly and escalate it, and figuring out ways to take policies and whether it's pictures or, or scenarios, a common example that I give. And I just did a training yesterday, and I've talked to you all about it before is if you have people in your stores that really employees that have trouble, uh, with transgender employees transitioning their name and wanting to continue to call them by their former name, instead of doing a lesson on what the different letters mean.

Speaker 2:

I just asked them how many friends from high school did they know that have gotten married, or how many of their guy friends changed their name from their college nickname to be more professional, or how many converted religions. And was that ever an issue when your best friend, you know, changed, uh, to her married name, or did you continue to call them the name before they were married and, and finding ways to connect with people and show them that, Hey, this is not, we just want equal treatment. We want equitable treatment. This isn't special treatment, this isn't something new. This is just our issues that you've already come to understand presented in a different light. So I kind of want to end with each of your roles, if you have thoughts of how you resonate with frontline, but also where do you see a little, uh, where do you see, uh, your, uh, ANF brands and, and Greg, where, where you see, uh, the LVMH brands going up over the next year, and whether that's a challenge, a responsibility, uh, something that you're wanting to achieve or a goal. I think it would be great if you could each leave our audience with, with what's on the horizon, uh, from, from your perspective, happy to, uh, Edwin, if you want to start with,

Speaker 3:

Yeah, that sounds good. And John you've known me for a long time, so, you know, my name has changed many times.

Speaker 2:

Yes, exactly. There's hyphens hyphens makes me very nervous.

Speaker 3:

Um, I will say this for our frontline workers. Um, something that we always try to do is we make sure there's all, we always have to engage them because that is the majority of our workforce. So actually just on Tuesday, we did a Juneteenth event and because we want to get as many people as possible, we did two sessions. So we tried to do a morning session and then kind of a late afternoon session because we want to get as many people as possible. And we know that our frontline workers are sometimes working different types of shifts. And so we wanted to make sure we can get as many people as possible to those types of events. Also when it comes to employee resource groups, like we always change the

time of the meetings and always include a phone option as well for people because we want to include as many people as possible.

Speaker 3:

So, um, definitely I think for legal, including our frontline workers is always at the top of our mind because that is the majority of our workforce. As I look toward kind of what's going to happen in the future. I'm almost hesitant to say, because I feel like 2020, uh, everything changed. And you, if you ask me January 1st, 2020, what we were going to do, it was completely different than what actually happened. But what I can tell you though, is, you know, legal is a very metric focused organization. So I think seeing improvements and some of our KPIs and DNI metrics, as far as our leadership, something else that we want to do this year is to get another business employee resource group off the ground. And, you know, we're pushing for an LGBTQ plus, uh, group. And so I'm really hoping that we can get that together, um, in the next year. And then on the customer side, I think really taking kind of the research that we've been doing on, um, diverse suppliers and actually seeing that kind of come to fruition where you can actually see products in our stores that are coming from diverse suppliers. So, and just overall, I think for us, it's just, like I said, in the beginning mean

Speaker 5:

We want to have a diverse and inclusive workforce where everybody can bring their whole selves to work every day. And I just can't emphasize that enough because that, that is truly what we're after. That's what we want. And I think that will ultimately be what helps to drive our business forward in the future, Greg. Um, then when I'm, um, I'm low to predict 20 21, 20 22, I was just hoping to get people trained on unconscious bias in 2020 and in a totally different place. And thankfully we did. So the conditions help that. I think what, you know, if I think about our organization internally, um, I want to know that by the end of this year, every employee has access to an employee resource group, um, and feels comfortable to join no matter where they are in the world or whatever make up that employee resource group is very different for us around the world, in terms of how we focused on when we really let the local teams build them as if the SAC fit with our culture and the organization.

Speaker 5:

Um, I want to have more stories like the one I shared about the brand manager and don't pair, and y'all where the employees see themselves in the product. And they also that our customers also see themselves reflected in the way that we promote the product and we go to market and we were in our boutiques and bars and restaurants, and, you know, finally we've, um, we've set three objectives for us, for ourselves within Moet Hennessy, specifically that we want to have gender parity by 2023. Uh, we want to have a diverse representation within all internal mobilities, uh, by 2023 or at 50%. And then we want to be recognized as a top European company and diversity equity and inclusion. So that gives us a good internal and external benchmark. We have a lot of work to do to get to those three, but I'm pretty optimistic.

Speaker 5:

And the energy that we have internally that we can push forward and we can make progress and get to those points. And maybe even in 2023, we may look at those metrics and say, that was pretty easy. Why didn't we set the set, the bar higher Gabby, I'll just briefly comment and say, I think it really starts with changing minds and hearts to be open as an organization to collective cognitive organizational shifts, especially as it relates to diversity and seeing it outside of just race and ethnicity and seeing it's more

broad understanding of the intersections, understanding unique barriers in terms of equity and equity that might exist and working to support and champion those communities and work through and very intentional, authentic, and thoughtful way to really, really show up for those communities. And a lot of that starts with education at Abercrombie

Speaker 4:

And Fitch launched our courageous conversations, um, core, it's basically a core curriculum designed to tackle topics. Like anti-racism bring those things into the workforce, talk about those things, microaggressions. How does that show up at work? How does it show up in terms of our interactions with customers or across our teams, unconscious bias, implicit bias, racial bias, right? And just working to roll out these types of trainings and workshops, which we have done globally to our 30, 32,000 associates. Um, and in addition to that executive leader training, right, for our CEO, CFO brand president, you know, these types of things are important to see that there's that connectivity to the top and that we're setting the precedent right from a corporate perspective. And all those things kind of like trickling down and supporting our stores organization, which holds, you know, of course the majority of our associates, somewhere around 30,000 associates globally.

Speaker 4:

So we're setting the stage and then also, you know, creating this environment where we as associates know that these are movements. They're not just moments. It's not just the month of June. It's not just during black history month, but these are always on initiatives that we will work to support and advance our mission to create more equity and inclusion across our organization. So we'll continue to show up, I guess, as we're kind of looking at, you know, the next year, it's very uncertain. There's obviously a lot of acceleration investments made in light of George Floyd in light of Briana Taylor in light of all the atrocities that we've witnessed across many of our communities, but we have to continue to show up, to listen, to learn, to unlearn and to position our organization as a leader and go into those spaces that might feel uncomfortable. So to get comfortable with that discomfort and we'll continue to change and evolve and grow, and hopefully we'll see that shift across our cascaded, across our industry holistically.

Speaker 2:

I echo everything. The three of you said, I, I think I would just add, uh, to the LGBT community. Uh, and everyone who's listening in that are our allies. We, you have to have humility. And what I've learned is the power of allies and people who are outside of the LGBT community. And you remember how long it may have taken you to get on this journey of self acceptance and people who aren't part of it. They may be overwhelmed and it's, it's, it's not animus. Uh, it's just a lack of information. Uh, they, uh, lack of, uh, humanizing who we are. Uh, it took a lot of us a long time to get to the point where we can be sitting here on this panel today, comfortably, personally, uh, excelling professionally and finding allies of who are outside our community, who can champion our cause and having patience, uh, with your coworkers and giving, uh, your colleagues, the benefit of the doubt, uh, to educate, uh, is something that I think I personally, uh, is, is our obligation.

Speaker 2:

So I really enjoyed, uh all of you. Uh, thank you, uh, to the audience. I would say go buy, uh, some, a loaf of bread and little parrot with a glass of champagne and wear a Abercrombie and Hollister's new collection. Uh, and we'll all have a great afternoon, but thank you. And if, if you will please, uh, tune back in, uh, at one 15, uh, it's a two-part panel, I think it will be equally informative. So check your email,

uh, go take a break and hopefully we'll see you in 15 minutes and thank you all again, and thank you out leadership for the fantastic.

Speaker 6:

Thanks so much.

Speaker 7:

[inaudible] [inaudible] [inaudible]

Speaker 2:

Hi everybody. My name's John Richards. Uh, I understand some of you are joining us for the first time others, uh, carried over from the first panel, which was excellent. So I will try not to repeat myself from an hour ago, uh, but it goes without saying I'm very proud to be the global co-chair of GTS retail group. I'm also equally impressed. I thought the music was pretty edgy, uh, for a law firm, uh, just saying, so thank you, uh, to, uh, our leadership and our marketing department, uh, for putting that together. And as I said from, uh, earlier, I will go into the same, uh, amount of detail, but what I'm really the most proud of, uh, during pride month, uh, right now is who I work with on our retail industry team. And you could go on about substantive expertise and, and geography in level of service.

Speaker 2:

But for today I'm proud of the diversity, uh, the authenticity, uh, the inclusive nature. The fact I can be, uh, myself and our team, uh, can be, uh, themselves, uh, with our retail clients, uh, is what this is all about because, uh, the GT, uh, and the teams with whom I work, we understand that, but so do our clients. And so do these leaders in the retail industry who are allies or LGBT, uh, that are really paving the way, allowing diverse lawyers, uh, to succeed in the respect of law firms, because they recognize, uh, that diverse and authentic, uh, lawyers solve problems and solve problems well, and can help meet their needs. So knowing that and knowing the power of our clients who are, who are the consumer or, uh, leaders in the examples that they can set, uh, as members of the community and allies in the retail industry around the world, I want to introduce our panelists today are joining us.

Speaker 2:

I think everybody, uh, introduce each of you. And, and like I was saying our panelists today, whether it is a mentor, mentee, a new friend, a former client, an existing client, I really have respect for each of you in the conversations that we've had, uh, preparing for this panel of, because of your work ethic, because the examples that you've set at the various companies, uh, which you've led, uh, and evolved under your leadership. Uh, so, so with that being said, I want to introduce, uh, Greg baker, uh, Greg baker is executive vice president and general counsel of a giant Eagle. Uh, we have Brian Hankey who is CEO of Versace Americas, and a Kiko, uh, Kuma who is general counsel and corporate secretary of events. So

Speaker 8:

We'll go

Speaker 2:

Into, I can go into more detail and turn it over to the panelists, uh, in a second, but I kind of want to set the stage and was thinking about, uh, what the times that you had been under, under your leadership



in, in the last year and a half. And there is some exhaustion and fatigue, but hopefully now, uh, optimism in a renewed sense of energy and spirit, uh, both at your companies and in the retail industry, when people talk about retail and let's talk about it really broadly of any company that is selling goods, whether it's luxury, fashion, or consumer goods, food beverages, and groceries, uh, to consumers, obviously the retail space has evolved, uh, with respect to D and I, and then you had, as we all know, uh, some unanticipated, uh, unanticipated, certainly uninspected global pandemic, uh, coupled with social unrest, social movements, a very divisive election. So I wanted to take a minute for each of you a more than a minute to talk about how you personally, or your organization got through those obstacles and how you have successfully, uh, and the consumer seen it. Uh, clients have seen it, shareholders have seen it, uh, moved, uh, your companies, uh, in the right direction, uh, under your leadership. So maybe we'll start with Greg and go around and, and Greg, please, um, uh, you can tell us about a little more about yourself.

Speaker 9:

Sure. John, thank you. And thanks to our leadership and Greenberg chard, who's been a great partner to me for years and thank you for the good, uh, interlude music. I felt like should have a drink in my hand. Uh, but I don't. Um, it was quite good. So, um, I started off in law firm for 12 years, and then I became a general counsel of a private fashion company, the limited. And then after the limited, I became the general counsel of a public fashion company Chico's and they operated Chico's white house, black market and Selma, uh, following that stint, I'm now at a private grocery chain called giant Eagle, and we operate grocery stores, convenience stores and pharmacies. And we're about a \$10 billion company with about 30,000 employees. Um, I've experienced the, I call it I E N D a journey, uh, in different stages at different companies.

Speaker 9:

So this is just my personal experience across companies speaking on behalf of myself. So some of them had fledgling programs, um, where we didn't have much, uh, it didn't have much of a need. And then at a public company, we felt a growing pressure to have a more robust program, but we were dipping our toe into the water and maybe dipping our toe into the water. It really meant maybe just training people or acknowledging the problem. And now I'm at a private company that has quite a robust program. So I think the stages are acknowledgement that there's something that needs to be fixed, uh, educating the workforce and then actually taking action because just acknowledging and being educated is not enough today, especially in the wake of all of the political turmoil and the social injustice that we're facing. So I think the next, uh, expression of programs is really asking why, like, why is this happening, uh, training for empathy to really lead to better outcomes, uh, building, uh, I E and D into your strategy, uh, and your company DNA, and, um, really focusing on fixing societal injustices.

Speaker 9:

So we call it, I E N D because we want to start with inclusion. It's helping everyone feel like they belong, right. It's respect for all. And then we follow up with equity, which really means in my mind, treating everyone fairly and we do it right. And then diversity really relates to the different perspectives from people from unique backgrounds and experience, um, in terms of the evolution of programs, uh, moving to action oriented and building into your strategy. Here are some things that I've seen and then currently, uh, working with. So having specific goals for diverse representation, leadership that are time bound. So that's incorporated into our culture, uh, every candidate for an open role, we have a slate of

candidates and it must include diverse candidates. And we also do things that are kind of simple to mitigate bias. For instance, we remove names from resumes.

Speaker 9:

We remove the names of colleges in case they went to a historically black college or university, so that when you're reviewing the resume, you're reviewing it a blind. You're looking at the qualifications. Um, our incentive compensation programs are actually tied to inclusion, equity and diversity goals. So put your money where your mouth is. You know, people are going to take action when it's tied to their comp. Every officer in the company is assignment mentees, and one of which is a person of color. So I have two mentees that I meet with on a monthly basis to make sure that they have an advocate to help them move up the career ranks and get into leadership roles. We have supplier diversity goals. We actually dedicate resources, a dedicated resource to find suppliers that are diverse, whether it's a woman owned ice cream company or a GLBT company that makes cupcakes for our pride cupcakes for our stores, uh, we specifically seek them out and we showcase them, uh, business resource groups, uh, the particularly, uh, affinity for, and really just, uh, customer things that face the customer to make sure that our customers are all being respected and making sure when we hear complaints from our customers, that we address them.

Speaker 9:

So those are just, those are all about

Speaker 2:

Holding the company accountable and management that we built into our culture, some examples, and they really, you know, there's continuum. Some folks just start with unconscious bias training, and then they build a more robust program over time. But that's been my experience. I could do a whole panel on following up with every one of those items, not in order of importance, we'll go back to the cupcakes and what flavors and prostitutes they have, and it they'll be available, but I appreciate that. And I'd like to, we'll go back to some of the comments, a great Meg focusing really internally on what the organization has done to create the atmosphere of inclusion at giant Eagle, turning to Brian, who I think can offer, uh, a different, but also similar perspective. Having worked at various public private fashion brands and iconic brands, and now a CEO of a brand of a, of a public holding company. If you could talk about your evolution, uh, in the evolution of the brand and how you have helped, uh, effectuate or, or, or worked under your leadership, uh, to have the success that Versace has had, uh, with which its its, its brand its employees and the consumer and marketplace.

Speaker 6:

Sure, absolutely. And thank you first, uh, John, um, uh, to you and for hosting today and, um, for [inaudible] for championing DNI in internally in your own organization, but also with your clients actively and also within the communities that we all live in. It's, uh, I think there's really a great example there that's, that's set and of course, for our leadership for setting up this platform and we're making it as easy as she has made it so far, although I'm sure I might mess something up along the way. So I just took myself off of me as well before I started speaking to Greg and I also, you know, I took a lot of notes. It's very interesting. Some of the things you said, and I made a couple of notes for myself as well. Um, some, so, so thank you for all that you shared.

Speaker 6:

Um, you know, John, as you mentioned in the past 27 years, I've been in, uh, I worked for three brands most recently, um, at Versace and previously at Jimmy choo and then prior to that at product for 12 years. So I had, you know, very, very diverse experiences. Um, and I think that if I went back to the prior experiences today, they would probably be different than they were then because the world has changed and world is continuing to evolve. So I try sometimes not to draw comparison, making one feel or look better and its experience than the others. Um, but really the culmination of this past say 14, 15 months has been one of the most educational moments for myself. And I think also for the brand that I looked at again, a lot of this is my own personal interpretation, my own personal opinions, but you know, some of the things that I'll share with you now are very specific evictions and things that we've engaged in, um, in the past year, you know, you, you, you, you mentioned sort of how the pandemic, it may have accelerated things.

Speaker 6:

And it certainly did. I think it gave way to a lot of additional thought and then the pandemic throughout that, even more so in the United States, you know, really, uh, the violence against the black community always been there, which was now so much more exacerbated, really, I think inspired a lot of us to sort of look in char our own minds and hearts and also the companies as well, especially working remotely for, for as long as we all did. I think, you know, there was a lot of time spent on our own. A lot of time spent maybe just in a small little pod of people and you did start to think about, well, what is the world that we're in and how do I make it better on my own? And what can I do? The company is part of a holdings group, capital holdings.

Speaker 6:

And so it's three brands together, Michael Kors, Jimmy choo, and Versace. And I'm an under president for the, for the north American division. We started very quickly with monthly communications, um, initially celebrating diversity and encouraging inclusion among all of our employees. Uh, they go out monthly there, they, they can be something that celebrates, um, you know, festivities and holidays across the world, across different cultures and across different races and beliefs. And it's been really nice, has been an incredible outpouring of feedback from employees coming back saying how great this is. And it's so interesting. And in each of these festivities, in the celebrations, um, employees at every level from, from CEO of a brand, all the way down to a stock person in the store are chosen at random to give their perspective on these things. And so your actual voices and, um, you know, and there's some great stories that are being told in the process.

Speaker 6:

Uh, we, we also actively, uh, began training our entire population on DNI in the workplace, uh, concerning muscle microaggressions and unconscious bias. And that was really something that I think a lot of people, myself included, found very educational, very eyeopening. There's just so much, um, as you mentioned earlier that perhaps doesn't occur intentionally, but that nonetheless, we all need to, to acknowledge and come forward and, and allow ourselves to be educated and also allow ourselves to be, uh, to unlearn certain things. Um, we have been aggressively working through diversifying our population in north America. I can speak to the north American market in particular. And, you know, I personally think that the

Speaker 10:

DNI journey

Speaker 6:

Is, is at a different point in its trajectory across the globe in different places and in different countries, but specifically to the U S um, I can tell you, we have, um, been bringing in a much broader range of candidates and Greg, to the point that you mentioned earlier. I think it's really, really fantastic. Some of the things you you're doing, um, in, in how you present the candidates to people internally. Um, we also have a series of, uh, diversity inclusion, um, speaker series, um, in conjunction with our monthly communications. And those have been very interesting too. Sometimes it'll be outside speakers. Sometimes it'll be a topic that we open up to a panel within the, the company itself and people are asked to join. I was a lot, it's amazing how many people want to participate and to be part of this process. So, um, you know, I have to say that that's been very eye-opening, it's certainly just the very beginning of a lot of things that we want to do.

Speaker 6:

And, and lastly, I wanted to say that, you know, we've also created, there has been a foundation for the advancement of diversity in the fashion is created by punched \$20 million, um, working with colleges and universities and create mentorship programs and, um, meaning to create meaningful opportunities within the fashion industry. Um, if I'm allowed one more minute, I just want, you know, I think what everybody you think, oh, fashion industry, you know, coming off of, you know, in Greg you've had experiences both in fashion industry and now in something, you know, it's something different. I think everyone thinks, oh, fashion industry it's, it's so open, it's so inclusive. It's so, you know, it's, it's just a given and it is what it is, but it's really not, you know, in the fashion industry is actually has a very long way to go. Um, it's not actually nearly as inclusive.

Speaker 6:

And I think for me working at Versace, I sometimes forget that because it has been, so it is so organic within our own brand that I tend to send them to forget that it's not necessarily all all across the board. I mean, the fashion industry is still very much, um, you know, white heterosexual male industry. Um, and although it does stretch boundaries, um, across the board in comparison to other industries, it has its own own work to do. Um, so I'm, I'm inspired to, to personally engage in a lot of these things. You know, I, one of the words that keeps coming up is mentorship programs and that's really something that I personally feel very strongly about. Um, you know, I have tried that throughout my career. I think that, you know, for me personally, where I, where I leave off one day, um, when I look back, I will hope to have made experiences easier and better for other people and less about of course, yes, the bottom line and the top line for the businesses. But those are the things I would choose to be remembered for. Well, let me, I want to go back to a couple of points that Brian Brian made, but if you could speak your perspective of being general counsel of a public company and talking about our events, your brands and the evolution of them and what, what you see is driving your D and I efforts.

Speaker 11:

Yeah. Thanks, Sean. And thanks for having me, um, for those of you that, um, don't know about our company, we operate three brands, um, Vince, Rebecca Taylor, and Parker, um, through navigating the pandemic, we've been focused on our two main brands than some, um, Rebecca Taylor, which are, um, luxury, um, contemporary clothing lines. Um, we're a public company, but, um, we have about 500 employees. So we're a very small public company. Um, we are, um, evolving in many different ways and we're obviously trying to grow our business. Um, and I think the DNI efforts that our company really pick started last year in June, um, along with the souls were happening. And I think that, you know, um, I

think I'm seeing really the evolution of, um, how accompany at dApps and really quickly tries to address these, um, efforts in a, um, positive and productive way.

Speaker 11:

Um, the efforts really started with conversations, um, amongst associates and some of the associates that were willing to really share, um, personal experiences and really put themselves on the, on the line to really, you know, speak up and make these a topic that the company really should focus on. And I think that was really impressive. And from my personal perspective, obviously I'm a diverse individual operating in a predominantly white, um, culture. And I think that, you know, it really was an eyeopening experience for me as well, personally, because, you know, being part of management, dealing with these, um, the efforts, just something that I didn't really imagine myself to be doing in my career, and it's just been fulfilling and quite a learning experience. Um, I think that, um, you know, these personal conversations were very difficult in the beginning, but we've learned in the last year to really put some structure around them, to, um, con uh, to have them become an ongoing part of the business.

Speaker 11:

And I think we're really, um, you know, heading in the right direction. Um, and as a public company, obviously we're highly regulated. We're always expected to disclose certain aspects of our business. Um, and I think that, you know, from my perspective, the, um, the public company, regulators are starting to really put some pressure on public companies to disclose their efforts around DEI and other, um, social items. And I think that, you know, notable, notably, I think the periodic reports, um, now require some description. And I think a lot of public companies were using that to showcase their DNI efforts. So I think those regulations will not necessarily fuel these efforts, but I think they would definitely put some pressure on us to, um, be introspective and to continue to work on these efforts. Although I think the movements themselves really come from internally

Speaker 2:

And you know, what the company really wants the brands to stand for.

Speaker 9:

John L I'll jump in, um, having been a public company, GC, um, you are judged, uh, by these proxy advisory firms that rank your, you know, uh, your corporate, they look at your corporate social responsibility, uh, programs, and there's a tremendous push over the last years to have diversity on your boards. Not only gender diversity, uh, started with that, but now it's moving towards some more diversity, huge push for that in the movement. And some jurisdictions are actually requiring it now, like New York is considering that, or it may have actually passed it. Um, but so there's a lot of pressure to make sure that you're divorced. You have a diverse board. And, uh, so that was interesting to navigate, but now being at a private company, we to, uh, want a diverse board and we do have one in terms of gender and racial makeup.

Speaker 9:

And the reason why is, uh, not just to have a diverse board it's for better business results, it's always make the pitch why this stuff matters from a bottom line perspective, you build a, uh, open culture where people can bring their authentic selves to work. When people can bring their authentic selves to work, they stay longer. Uh, you got less recruiting costs. You have more free flow of ideas, uh, which leads to innovation, uh, which leads to better business results for the bottom line. So not only do I

always proselytize it from a business perspective and a right thing to do perspective, but just sometimes, uh, convincing the folks who aren't moving along as quickly, that it's good for the bottom line is helpful.

Speaker 2:

I think this kind of leads into the next question. I, I totally agree, because when I do training on these topics and you're trying to get buy in of maybe segments of your employee population that feels left out, or think that diversity and inclusion doesn't somehow include them. You can have different religious views and different cultural views and different political views, but people understand the bottom line. And sometimes you just have to explain it and they say, well, I'm an hour. If you're an hourly worker or a lower level manager, I'm not seeing those financial returns you're talking about, but I do appreciate when four hours of my day has to be taken up to participate in an investigation or turnover documents because of an incidence of harassment and discrimination. And I really wish I could have avoided that in those circumstances. I, what you're saying,

Speaker 6:

I want to ask each of you this question, because it goes to the bottom line and especially Greg and Brian, and I can't go what you were saying on doubling down on D and I efforts. What is your response to the concern or the objectors of saying, look, Jainy cooperates and red states and Versace is also in some very conservative markets. And so is Vince. And there is this huge base that we somehow are alienating by the products we promote or our endorsements or sponsorships or our fashion shows is how do you, um, do you deal with it? Do you double down, just would love for you guys to speak, to, uh, speak to that from, from a cultural and then kind of an economic perspective, Whoever?

Speaker 11:

No, it's okay. Oh, sorry. Um, yeah, I can, I can start because I think, you know, Vince obviously is, um, um, uh, nationally, um, you know, expanded business at this point, we have about 90 stores throughout the United States. Um, and I think this question was always there for retail. And I think traditionally from my perspective, retailers have just, um, you know, shied away, especially retailers of our size. We just tried to stay quote unquote neutral. And I think, you know, the time has changed. I think we really need the need to stand for something is very strong. And I think that, you know, although we may alienate some of the customers, um, you know, I think the brands really need to, um, you know, consider what they're going to really push forward, moving forward, moving forward, because otherwise, I don't think as businesses we can survive, I think most consumers are starting to look at what the purposes of the businesses are beyond what the products, the products that they actually offer. So, um, it's not something that we can just shy away from just because some of our customers might not agree with the stances that we're taking.

Speaker 6:

And, you know, I would, I just jumped in. I think that, you know, we stand at the brand for you to freedom, freedom to be who you are into and to choose what you wish to embrace. And that goes as far as what you choose to purchase and, and why. And I think that, well, no company would necessarily look to alienate anybody who doesn't believe that that's worth their while. And in believing you certainly, aren't going to try to pick up people along the way and convince them otherwise. I mean, I think that this is needs to be a global view and it needs to be everybody's view. And I don't think that there's necessarily an agenda being pushed through the products that are offered or necessarily, um, you know, a big statement only specifically being made around certain things. But I think by opening up our, um,

opening up our creations to, uh, to be accessible to a broader audience in terms of their tastes and their desires, I think that really that in itself is a very strong action.

Speaker 6:

And, you know, it's not like, you know, we, we, we go online and say, okay, we're doing this because of this. And we're doing that because of that. I think those who are awake are, are noticing, and those who have been asleep or who choose to be asleep, they notice also, and, um, people will choose their own actions, you know, and I think, um, what's the way forward and that's the way we want to be. That's the kind of community we wish to be. And that's not an official company statement. That is my personal belief from the experience within the company. And I, and I know that people would stand for that.

Speaker 9:

So, I mean, I've worked for a variety of companies and some of them wouldn't say the word gay in the beginning, and then they evolved, or, and I've worked for companies with different demographics, you know, at Chico's the Chico's brand skews a little bit more mature and something more mature. People might have different, uh, beliefs and some of them might not. And then some of the, uh, less mature brands, like why a stock market might cater to a younger demographic or Selma. And then at a grocery retailer, we, everyone has to be catered to everyone. Um, but I think that companies, um, it takes courage sometimes to take a stand on social issues. Um, and I liked what Akiko said about, uh, a purpose beyond profit. Uh, you know, why are we here and what is the greater meaning of what we're doing? So we are committed to social justice and of course, things like food insecurity, but there's an intersection, uh, uh, some of the social justice and things as well, but it's hard, uh, to take a stance on something when you know that it could alienate your customers and hurt your bottom line.

Speaker 9:

So I understand why some companies, uh, feel a little bit reserved doing that. And in a public company, you've got quarterly pressure to deliver on your earnings. So then if the times are tight, you might be less inclined to alienate anyone because you need the income to sustain the business and especially during COVID. Um, but I wholeheartedly believe that businesses are a vehicle for social change, a lot quicker than the government, so we can lead the way. And oftentimes you see these big companies leading the way, and I mean, they're just paving the way for others. So I think if you, uh, the bottom line, you kind of have to lead with your company's values and got to

Speaker 2:

Respect all your customers and all your employee, or keep them safe, your customers, your employees, and make sure that you're, uh, have the best workforce, uh, no matter what the background, so you can succeed, but leading by your values can help you navigate those things that might feel tricky. I have a couple other thoughts, Kiko or Brian, anything to say to that. I want to kind of add to how that manifests itself. And I guess starting with, with fashion brands or Versace is something that I've seen that's affected. The LGBT community is, is moving towards more, a vendor list, a androgynous clothing, and seeing fashion shows, uh, evolve, uh, less, not just in policy of not having a set sex based dress code, but in practice, uh, in, in what it's worn, who it's worn by and not designated anymore. And I see a lot of Versace and, and, and Vince, and I guess, Greg, I don't want to leave you out. People Gaga did do the, um, but that's where it's an opportunity for intersectionality community to intersect through, through the visual space. And, uh, maybe we can start with Brian having been part of Versace's, um, ongoing evolution, how you've seen that play out.

Speaker 6:

Absolutely. You know, and, and, um, it's very natural for our creative director and, and, um, you know, Donna Tella, Versace, and not being a mouthpiece for her, but I, I, this is my observation. She's very, very connected to the LGBTQ plus community. And it hasn't been for a very long time. And I probably always, um, and it's, if anyone's inclusive, she is. And, you know, I think she is a visionary and she understands that in, in, in light of, uh, fashion and creativity. And, and it's really about, um, something bigger than people in general and putting down ideas and the fashion shows and runway shows. We have evolved, we have incredibly diverse, um, cast on the runway. It was very much witnessed in our, one of our shows back in September. Um, and that was a very natural thing. That was not a reaction. That was, that was something that the evolution of many shows prior we have had started bringing in male and female models, um, into both men's or women's runway shows and, and showcasing there.

Speaker 6:

And the idea behind it is, is showing, um, a creative concept and it really is, can be genderless and is genderless. And it's about a creative concept. It's not about a female concept and a male concept, and sure people will still choose what they wish to purchase. And things will be segregated still on the, on websites and things to a certain degree. Um, and a lot of that is organizational purposes in orange. We have navigate people, find what they want, those are the things that are available. Um, but it, it has been a really interesting process. You know, the leather goods and accessories are carried down the runway, um, uh, you know, by women and by men. And, and there may be many in the population who look at the show and go like, oh, why, why is that man carrying a handbag? And, well, I don't know, it's just the leather bag.

Speaker 6:

I mean, you can choose to call it what you want, and it's just because it's fabulous. You see more and more, you know, and, um, it's not telling you that they all should all carry, you know, a handbag, but it's also saying that it doesn't really matter. It's a handbag, it's an object, right. It's not sexual as an object. And then you have, um, parts of our shoe collection. We've got something that, uh, there's a combat food that just has come out and it'll be on the, in the stores in the coming year. And it's available in black and it's available in lavender and it's in both the men's and the women's collections, and it's kind of like, it's not really oriented towards or the other. And so they're, you know, these are small things, but these are symbols and signifiers of, of a thought process going forward.

Speaker 6:

And, um, I think that that's one of the things that I love and appreciate about the brand so much. And, um, it's, it's, it's eye opening. And I think a lot of, a lot of companies can, can learn from that. And I think internally we are continuing to learn from that as well. So thank you for bringing that up because it's actually something that I think is very unique. I mean, you don't see that necessarily all over again. Like I said earlier, everyone always thinks, oh, fashion open, diverse, inclusive, and yes, more so than many industries, but by no means where it needs to be.

Speaker 2:

And then how does that concept right. Translate into the boutique or the store when a customer comes in and the manager looks at the individual and says, oh, the men's is over there, or the woman's sections over there without asking and directing people to a particular way and changing that mindset, uh, all the way down. I think your point is, is an excellent one because the example that it sets not just for the



consumer, but people who are struggling with their gender identity in their orientation, to know that they're welcome with a brand and they can have clothes that can reflect who they are and how they want to express themselves, um, is, is really powerful and encouraging Kiko. Do you have any kind of thoughts, uh, in, in, in terms of Rebecca Taylor and invents and the approach to, uh, clothing and accessories as, as whether it relates to gender or any other intersectionality piece?

Speaker 11:

From my personal perspective, I think fashion brands play a huge role in defining what beauty is and what standard of looks. I think that's a really, actually it has reaches really beyond anything else because what a person sees growing up, you know, as a standard is it does impact their confidence throughout their lives. I mean, I didn't really see anybody that looked like me that was modeling, you know, clothing. And even whenever I clicked through to buy clothing, I have to put some filter to see how it was not going to match my skin tone or my hair color and, you know, things like that. I think the great thing about Dionne dif words and the things that have really started to change since last June is that, um, I see many, many diverse models modeling, different kinds of clothing. And I think that, I don't know if itself, I think is how, um, you know, uh, how the fashion industry can really contribute to, um, DEI efforts. Um, and I think Vincent, Rebecca Taylor, we obviously try to focus on racial diversity and picking models. Um, and I think there's been more emphasis now and of course, sizing diversity as well. Um, you know, not just one, a model that looks like a, you know, a certain standard size model, our clothing. And I think, you know, with respect to generalists and things like that, I think we're still evolving. Um, but I think it's important that fascial brands really, um, uh, become sort of the competence builder as opposed to, you know, putting, um, unnecessary, uh,

Speaker 9:

Hey John, despite being in grocery, I was going to start in the fashion industry 18, early 18 hundreds. It feels like, um, but the key goes right. Like we started, uh, I was negotiating contracts with supermodels and, you know, they were then the ideal image. And then I noticed over time that we started, there was more body inclusivity, uh, and, uh, welcoming women of different shapes and sizes and colors because, uh, and it worked from a business perspective. It was the right thing to do. We broadened our audience. Uh, and one thing that I thought was interesting in that evolution is we used the business resource groups for business, and we actually asked their input on marketing. And when you brought in people from those BRGs, uh, and heard their point of view, it actually helped us refine our marketing. So we didn't stub our toe, uh, cause you can easily in marketing, but also it made sure that we were representing our, so it was helpful,

Speaker 2:

Greg, cause I don't want to leave out a grocery. You met, you mentioned pride cupcakes. So let's say that, that is your version of your pride collection. So how have you had success, uh, with whether it's boxes of, of cereal that you carry or, or particular types of foods where they were clearly correlated with a celebration in this case of, uh, LGBTQ equality? How, how has that been received and showcase?

Speaker 9:

Um, well personally, I mean I eat tons of probably cupcakes, so which means I'll be going to the gym this afternoon, but uh, not, uh, seriously, it's doing well. It's important to us. Um, we don't limit it to food products. I mean we also, uh, during pride month we showcase our, uh, team members on social media because we're proud of them and we let them tell their stories and just being visible. Uh, we think to the

world, uh, helps, uh, in our marketing too. So we do mark, could we have commercials and we like to make sure that the customers are represented in those commercials. So it's just smart business. Uh, and we wanted everyone to be included because we love our customers. Uh, I will say one thing, uh, that is particularly important to me. And I think Brian and also suggested that he lives by this I'm sure Kiko does as well, but using our roles of leadership to influence change in the company, uh, and taking people under our wing to make sure their path is easier than the ones that we had to navigate.

Speaker 9:

Uh, that's what makes my job so meaningful to helping people component because those are some of the most satisfying, uh, times to see a mentee of mine become a general counsel recently, like who is under a traditionally underrepresented group. And now she's a general counsel at a public company. It's just like, that's what it's all about. Or hosting a, uh, GLBT group at work or a trans person on my team and telling them that they're safe with me as their leader, I'm going to have their back and they can thrive under my protection and they make sure it happens. Um, or in the BRG, someone coming out for the first time who hadn't for 10 and told their colleagues that they were a lesbian for 10 years and then they come out and the weight of the world is lifted off of their shoulders and they actually feel comfortable at work and starting to feel supported and start performing better and want to stay like, those are the moments for me, uh, that are, I'm most proud of. Uh, you know, the business results are great, but the people, uh, things make me most proud make me tear

Speaker 2:

Up and be emotional. So I'll, I'll, uh, uh, I, I mean, I, I agree with that. Like that's what motivates me and that would motivate client relationships and relationships with employees and feeling like that you're doing your part. Uh, and if you saw the video in the beginning, one of our leaders, uh, my mentor, uh, Ernest Greer, he's, he said, we have an obligation, uh, to do this. And don't underestimate when you have a voice and you speak up, especially if you're an ally in your outside of the LGBT community, how far that will go. I wanted to make a comment and ask, uh, Kiko and Brian, if you had a thought about this, a CMO had said to me recently, well, a lot of times we have to put like two white men that are gay in a picture together, holding hands or showing affection.

Speaker 2:

Cause otherwise you just throw a white man as opposed to showcasing racial and gender diversity where we can act can be visible. Um, cause oftentimes people say, well, w what is different about, uh, about them? And I thought that that comment really showed how our community and we mentioned on the other call was, was very unique in that it, it transcends all of those other categories or, or, or groups of people. Um, and just if you had had any thoughts or, or, or commentary, uh, on, on the LGBT community, the, your, if you have a, uh, PRI uh, collection, your thoughts on, on kind of navigating the differences, uh, with, within the community and, uh, the success you've had around it, Brian and Akiko, if, if, if you want it to, uh, sure.

Speaker 6:

I'm happy to jump in. And, you know, we have, for instance, um, since I've been with the company about four and a half years now, and I can definitely recall this is our third fraud capsule collection that we've had. And, um, as I mentioned earlier, it's very organic and he's our creative director and, um, I for the design team and the merchandising team, and certainly myself and a lot of supporters, and I think first and foremost, it was born completely, not out of a business reason whatsoever, but it was more about

yeah. You know, making a, making a stance and taking a stance and making a point of view and saying, look, you know, we do believe, and, and here we're going to do something to celebrate that too. And if somebody wants to wear some of that and support some of that, then that's great.

Speaker 6:

And, you know, um, in 2019, [inaudible] was actually, um, uh, one of the, um, uh, ambassadors, uh, together with lady Gaga at the Stonewall day in 2019. And that was really fantastic. And if you recall, it was, you know, um, it was a big deal in New York and she came over specifically for that. And there was a huge celebration around it. We had products in the stores and everything sold out. Um, and it certainly wasn't, we made it purposefully accessible price points, uh, accessible for, for luxury, for wealth. And, and I think that that made a big difference. Also, we really tried to open up, um, donated a lot of it also. And then most recently, just this past, uh, well now this month, uh, we have the captain fluxion conjunction with lady Gaga for her 10 year anniversary of born this way and on sold out in minutes.

Speaker 6:

Um, and then I think that just goes to show you, you know, how many people are out there looking and supporting. And I think it just creates, um, a moment and it shouldn't be, you know, obviously in June, like, you know, obviously let's celebrate, let's have a capsule it's fall about June and then come July 1st. Everyone's like, okay, whatever, you know, but I, I, and I think we're far away from that now it's just taking a moment in time to really focus in on that. Again, it's not about the money and usually most of it, or a very large portion of it is donated or passed on. Um, but I think it makes a strong, uh, point of view in that. I think there's a lot of, a lot of pride, um, not to use that word specifically, but I am, I'm very prideful that we do this.

Speaker 6:

Um, you know, I, I didn't have that in previous companies that I worked at and, um, again, they may do it. Um, and you know, it's, it's exciting, it's, it feels good to be, um, you know, a gay man and 52 years old working in a senior level position and feeling very comfortable saying what I just said, you know, and, and, and that was not the case, you know, and, uh, years back. And I think that if in another 10 or 15 years, I can help make that journey even easier and better for other people about making really proud.

Speaker 11:

Yeah. Um, you know, as a business, we, we celebrate pride every year. Um, we do it in different ways. Um, you know, we provide opportunities for customers to, um, uh, uh, join us in donating in certain organizations to purchase a certain capsule, things like that. Um, I think this year, um, internally as well, we, um, uh, created, um, videos for, um, the internal organization to really capture some of the voices of LGBTQ plus communities. Um, so I think, you know, things like that, it's really evolving. Like I said, like our company is still evolving in these efforts, but I think we're really trying to create an environment that is embracing these values. And I think, you know, just like Brian just said, I think being able to, um, be part of management, you know, given your background, um, I think that is really important for people that are gonna come after us. And I think, you know, I do take it very seriously that, you know, people will look at me and say, okay, well, if she can go there, then I can too. So I think that, you know, that's, that's definitely become really, um, front of mind for me to really just not, not just, you know, go along the day, just doing my work, but like really understand what voice has I've been able to gain and how I'm going to use it going forward

Speaker 6:

Before we wrap up what's on the horizon,

Speaker 2:

Just to elaborate on something Brian said, and I think sometimes putting yourself empathy and in, uh, other people's shoes or our straight allies, it's such a big deal, or it's such a big deal, at least for me to reach the point where you're able to be on a seminar that's taped and broadcast globally and identify as, uh, as out, uh, and, and gay to colleagues and clients and, and to customers and not think that that is going to have a negative repercussion or be retaliated for doing so that, that takes so much work that some people would think, oh, it's just not a big deal to get on stage and say, I'm 52. And I've been married to my wife for 25 years. And it really is a, it's a big deal and a little bit goes a long way. And even if it's a piece of clothing or buying a pride cupcake where others can signal, uh, their support, uh, and then people in your roles, I think don't ever underestimate the power that you can have by just, uh, acknowledging either that you are part of the community or that you stand with the community.

Speaker 2:

So I really appreciated what Brian said, cause I don't, I didn't think 15 years ago I would even be here at four, could do something like this. Uh, I guess I like to end, and I appreciate all, all of your thoughts with just, I'm not going to ask people like the last panel. Well, what do you predict? Cause obviously the last year in the pandemic was a bit unpredictable, but what's your goal, uh, from, from a personal and a brand perspective as to D and I have, where do you see things going? And if we did this panel a year from now, uh, that you would be very, very proud of, or what do you see as your biggest challenge? Um, and what do you want us to leave? Leave, leave you with in terms of, uh, the brand, the audience, whoever wants to start

Speaker 9:

I'm well, um, well, I want to remind people that even though, um, they might not be in a leadership possession position yet you can lead from every seat. So when I was a young associate at a law firm, we had a prom every year and people wear tuxedos and dresses and known as bringing a dude with them. And I brought one and you don't have to be high up in leadership to be a leader, so you can do it. Uh, don't let that get in your way and it will be okay, I think because of who you are and how you come to work and being authentic and doing good work will change hearts and change minds. So you can lead from any seat. My personal goal is I'm building a team right now. I need five attorneys if anyone's looking. So I want to a world-class team. That's really cool. And it's going to listen to seminars like this, where you can say, lady dog got three times, like, how cool is that? Uh, I just want a team that's really to world class and lives by these values, because I think if I build that, we're going to kill it. So that's my goal.

Speaker 9:

I'm going to hang up.

Speaker 11:

Yeah, I think, um, so I think it's, I don't think I'm alone in saying this like really the pandemic really like the retail industry just pummeled and the fashion industry really, especially. And we've been gone, we've gone through so much hardship in the last year. Um, you know, we've lost a lot of people from

our organization as well on, I think even for, for, through all of that hardship, for some reason, we were able to come out and, you know, start to embrace these, you know, really important values that we, we meant necessarily did not before. And I think that just shows like, you know, the resilience of our employee base and the resiliency of the fashion brands as well to, you know, be just more than, um, someone that offers clothing. And I think I, it shows really bright future for us, and I think I'm proud to be part of it. And I think that, you know, would like to continue to contribute in the way I can to promote, um, equality and diversity for everybody.

Speaker 6:

And I, I have every color in the rainbow, no upon to have your fabulous sweaters and tees. So anyone has ever bought a sweater or a t-shirt. I highly recommend it. Greg didn't send me any giant Eagles, a sweat, or I want to add Brian, what are your thoughts on challenges, goals moving forward? Well, you know, if, if, if we're sitting here again next year at this time, I'm really hoping that I can speak really happily and positively about the first employee resource group that we'll be launching in September. Uh, first one is going to be for the LGBTQ plus community and that we're really looking for, for other ERG to organically pop up, um, around that afterwards. It's not something we've had before. And I, and I think that there could be a great response and also mentorship program. I'd like to be able to come back and talk more about that and how to Greg's point how that has transcended.

Speaker 6:

You don't have to be sitting in the top one or two seats to be a mentor and be a mentor at every level, because no matter what position you're at, there's always someone who's ahead of you, um, or who's experienced more than you and who could probably shed some light on some things for you. And so I think that that would be a really great thing to roll out at every level or multiple levels within a company. And to keep those point as well in during the pandemic. I mean, it was really tough. There were a lot of people who left an organization, um, and, and, and things, um, were very, and I think

Speaker 2:

At the very least, most all organizations learned that, um, that we needed to look a little deeper within and a little bit other things, obviously every business and everybody providing a good or a service is doing it for a business. Right. And so it's, that's not try to pretend like it's, that's not why businesses exist, but I think we've all learned or enough of us have learned that there's a lot more to it that make up the organization. And I think if we can be a lot more sensitive from across the board to all the groups that we can all come out better for, even in the business aspect of things, I agree, and I want to thank, uh, out leadership for, uh, providing and having the, um, I guess the foresight to say that, that, uh, you can drive change through business and what Greg had had discussed and creating a forum for us to, to advocate, uh, for our brands and the work that we do.

Speaker 2:

But I really thank each of you all, like all of your comments were personal, they were real, they were authentic. Uh, and I will take away, uh, the point of leading from where you are, uh, and, and not underestimating that. So thanks Greg for that observation. And, and, and thank you all just, uh, in individual capacity, professional capacity. So it was really great, really illuminating, and hopefully you can use this panel, uh, for the audience and the other panelists to listen to what, uh, your allies and other leaders are doing and use it as a vehicle to continue to press forward. So, um, go, uh, go to giant

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Eagle and go to events and go to Versace and have a, have a great weekend and thank you all for your time. Really appreciate it. Thank you.