

PUBLICATION

CSX Corporation Stays On Track with Diversity

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CSX's operations date back to the early nineteenth century when the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company (B&O) – the nation's first common carrier – was chartered in 1827. Since then, numerous railroads have combined with the former B&O through mergers and consolidations to create what we now know as CSX, a company with about 21,000 route miles of track in 23 states, the District of Columbia, and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Ten years ago, the demographic of CSX's workforce was nearly all white men with an average age of late forties. This was the result of a two-decade policy that generally discouraged new hiring and used attrition to right-size its workforce. CEO Michael Ward knew that this reality jeopardized its most valuable resource – its people – and embarked on a mission to make diversity and inclusion a corporate imperative.

CSX's action plan in 2002 started with naming Susan Hamilton as Assistant Vice President of Diversity. The next step was hiring a consultant to identify best practices regarding diversity and inclusion across other industries, and developing a three-year plan to implement best practices at CSX.

The diversity and inclusion program they created is comprehensive. In addition to race and gender, CSX's program is specifically inclusive of disabled persons and members of the GLBT community. Today, CSX has 32,000 employees. One-half of the management employees hired by CSX over the past three years have been diverse. Almost one-third of CSX's board of directors is diverse, and 50 percent of its executive team is diverse.

Not only does CSX offer domestic partner benefits, it participates in the Corporate Equality Index and had a 2011 rating of 85 (out of 100).

Inclusion at CSX means to foster a culture where people feel respected, safe, and valued, regardless of their differences. They've created 45 "Inclusion Councils" and groups across the company, half of which are based on geography and the other half on diversity. Each Inclusion Council or group has goals that include development of a business imperative, identification of charitable or philanthropic outreach in a certain demographic area, and employee engagement designed to tie diversity/inclusion training into employee activities, like a family day or a service project.

Five years after they started their inclusion efforts, CSX began winning national awards for its programs. To date, CSX has earned numerous awards, including a Top 23 ranking in 2012 by DiversityInc; and Top 50 rankings in 2008, 2009 and 2011 by DiversityInc; Top 10 in Supplier Diversity by DiversityInc; a Top 50 ranking by G.I. Jobs; a Top 50 ranking by Diversity MBA; a Top 50 ranking by Black MBA; a Top 60 ranking by Hispanic Business; 2011 and 2012 recipient of "National Disability Matters" award; and twice the recipient of the "Freedom Award."

Susan Hamilton says that the success of CSX's diversity and inclusion program is a result of its leadership:

"Our CEO, Michael Ward, demanded that we develop a strategy for hiring persons with disabilities. CSX was the first national corporate partner to the Wounded Warrior Project, through which we have hired interns and have hired for permanent positions wounded warriors.

The fostering of diversity and inclusion has been the right thing to do. We are a far stronger company today than when we started our diversity journey."

CSX is headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida. It provides rail and intermodal transportation services accessible by more than two-thirds of Americans.