



Equipping Clubs WITH TOOLS TO DRIVE DEI ENGAGEMENT

The National Club Association (NCA) has boldly taken steps to increase the golf and club industry's research and awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), which has become a top national focus over the last year. Since last summer, NCA has conducted numerous initiatives to educate and advise clubs on this increasingly important issue.

In 2020, NCA formed a DEI Committee to strengthen and focus these efforts and identify DEI priorities for clubs. The Committee is comprised of industry leaders, both men and women, of varied backgrounds. It is chaired by Terra Waldron, COO at Greensboro Country Club.

Last fall, NCA conducted an industry DEI survey to assess clubs' current level of conscious inclusion and to identify the resources club leaders need to face challenges in this area. The survey provided key benchmark data to guide future decisions.

Using the data as a foundation, NCA has worked with Heather Kim Degenhardt-Stifanic, founder of IIICONIC, an inclusion and diversity-focused nonprofit consulting organization, to provide her insight about the data. NCA also interviewed her in a groundbreaking edition of Club Director, which also included articles providing the business case for DEI and initiatives of the WE ARE GOLF Diversity Task Force.

"From the survey we learned that 71% of the responding clubs do not measure how their minority employees or minority members are made to feel welcome at their clubs. The best way to encourage conversations is to get the data to make organizational change," said Stifanic to NCA's Club Director magazine.

Stifanic also spoke about cultivating DEI as a leadership imperative and presented a blueprint for clubs at the 2021 National Club Conference held at Ocean Reef Club in Key Largo, Fla., in May and earlier this year presented a webinar along with other DEI leaders on developing an effective DEI plan at clubs.



In the same magazine, NCA analyzed the business case for DEI, which provided powerful concepts and strategies that illustrate the benefits of being proactively inclusive. "In 2019, the top quartile of ethnically diverse companies outperformed those in the bottom quartile by 36% in profitability."

The article highlights clubs that taken important steps to become more inclusive. At the Union League Club of Chicago, General Manager Mark Tunney discussed the club's diverse governance culture and how it has developed organically by having members with strong club culture serve on its board and committees. The club also supports minority communities through its three foundations and its Public Affairs Committee and Subcommittee on Race Relations.

"We are a social club committed to community and country, where we do things we enjoy and care about with people we enjoy and care about. We invite everyone to participate in our culture of hospitality, regardless of, but not limited to race, gender, sexual orientation, family status, religion, ethnicity, national origin, physical disability, veteran status, or age," said

Tunney.

The magazine also featured an article by Dr. Michael Cooper, Chairman of WE ARE GOLF's Diversity Task Force, and his team's efforts to connect hundreds of minority-led, community-based programs and golf industry leaders and to better include Historical Black Colleges and Universities networks to the game. Cooper and the task force advocated to members of Congress on National Golf Day to support Black and Brown involvement in the \$84 billion industry and communicated the opportunity golf has to become more inclusive. Since the meetings, the PGA TOUR and other leaders nationwide have taken stronger stances to support DEI initiatives.

In the spring issue of Club Director, released in May, NCA talked to golf and club leaders David Pillsbury at ClubCorp, Scott Van Newkirk at Troon and Lynn Mangan at Clubessential to learn about their companies' new DEI initiatives. The three leaders shared their firms' innovative, data-driven strategies, including staff surveys, scholarships, complimentary club memberships to top FirstTee performers, development and recruiting programs, and much more. All three companies developed committees geared to increasing education on DEI issue first before taking action.

This principled approach will be critical to creating meaningful and sustained change, said Pillsbury, "There is no quick fix to DEI and perception—the problem is endemic. You have to take incremental, authentic steps. While no one may notice your first five steps, which may take years, five years from now when you've taken more steps, it'll be noticed."

The National Club Association remains committed to taking action to educate and raise awareness of what golf courses and clubs can do to strengthen their memberships through DEI best practices.

For more information about NCA's DEI initiatives, or copies of these articles, please contact Vice President of Communications Cindy Vizza at vizza@nationalclub.org.