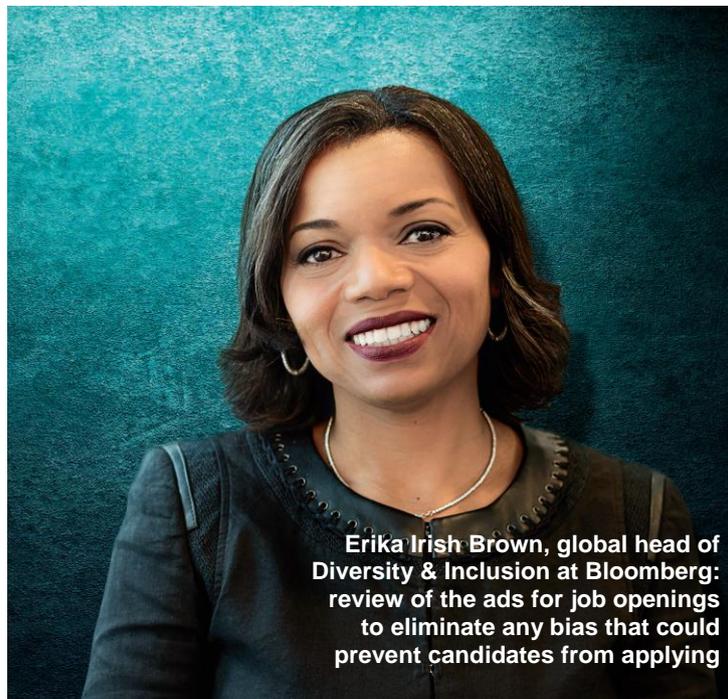


TATIANA SENDIN

GETTING DIVERSITY OFF THE DRAWING BOARD



Erika Irish Brown, global head of Diversity & Inclusion at Bloomberg: review of the ads for job openings to eliminate any bias that could prevent candidates from applying

HOW MEDIA COMPANY BLOOMBERG IS STRUCTURING ITSELF TO ATTRACT THE BEST TALENT, NO MATTER THEIR NATIONALITY, AGE, SEX, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, RELIGION OR CULTURE

With over 15,500 employees in 192 countries, Bloomberg has hired a head of inclusion and diversity to really put theory into practice. American Erika Irish Brown joined the media and technology company just over eight months ago to ensure an inclusive environment for everyone, regardless of nationality, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion or culture. Visiting Brazil for the first time, she talked to VOCÊ RH during the 2nd Diversity Week, held in October, at the São Paulo office.

When and why did Bloomberg decide to structure a diversity program?

The strategy began at Bloomberg about three years ago as a sub-theme for leadership. Now it involves the whole team. Our chief executive, Peter Grauer, sees an opportunity to attract the best talent through the plurality of people. The current generation of professionals expects this variety in the workplace, and when they find it, they feel connected and motivated. Besides being the right thing to do, heterogeneity also achieves positive results for the business. We believe that diversity is a driver of innovation and creativity. And finally, it connects us to our customers, who also seek diversity.

How does diversity contribute to the business?

You expand the way you talk, take decisions and think up new solutions. This plurality is due to the variety of people in terms of training, schools, cultures and skills and sexual orientation, such as LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender]. For example, the latest feature in our system was developed to include individuals with special needs, helping the visually or hearing-impaired to access the information they need. We have events on diversity worldwide and invite our customers, and this also contributes to the business.

How has the company been structured to get the plans off the drawing board?

The corporation's effort is being headed up by our chief executive, who called on each leader to create a plan and a diversity and inclusion goal for their business unit. This planning involves three things: recruiting, promoting and retaining diverse talent. Peter also asked each manager to choose a topic of diversity for themselves. Twice a year they report their progress and their indicators to the CEO and me. We also have groups of employees that are organized to research and discuss matters of interest. Globally, we have eight communities discussing topics such as women, family, black, Latino, Asian and other professionals. Some came about two years ago, some two months ago. In each one, they debate recruitment, leadership and development. And finally, we have a team that takes care of internal and external communications, as it is important that the market know that we are a company that supports diversity.

What changes have been made to human resources practices?

Each time my team sets a diversity and inclusion goal, people management practices are revisited. We analyze what we are doing today and what we need to change to be an enabling environment for lesbians, for example. We review ads for job openings to eliminate any bias that could prevent diverse people from applying. We ask recruiters to supply a list of candidates without restrictions, for any position. Finally, candidates are interviewed by a diverse group of employees to ensure that decisions are taken based on the requirements for the position, not someone's preferences or prejudices. Since 2000, we have offered employee benefits to same-sex partners.

What results have been achieved so far?

In the last eight months, we have won some small victories. We conducted our first round table with directors in New York to discuss opportunities for black women in the workplace. We also trained about 1,500 Bloomberg employees on unconscious biases, and increased the number of breastfeeding rooms worldwide. In 2014, globally, women accounted for 32% of our workforce and 27% of our managers. Our CEO wants to increase the percentage of women in the 1,000 key leadership positions from its current 17% to 30% by 2020. We have lots of activities underway, but we know that there is a long way to go.

(Article published in VOCÊ RH magazine, December 2015 – January 2016)