



Accelerating Equity through Mind-shifting and Mentorship

Key Takeaways observed during a REBA Together Tuesday Conversation | June 8, 2021

Note: these comments are not intended to be advice, but a recount and summary of points shared by panelists and attendees.

Call to Action

Corporates have tremendous buying power and opportunity to accelerate equity across the energy sector, but specifically in renewable and clean energy. This opportunity is even larger now that more and more corporate energy buyers are making large commitments to move toward a net zero carbon economy. Corporate energy buyers be in the form of internal HR processes and structures, and external collaboration and mentorship.

Topline Takeaways

- + A just renewable transition includes diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) and is a pathway to address some of the largest problems the country is facing, such as systemic racism, and implications COVID-19 had on the economy and jobs, and on underserved communities that were hit the hardest. With many diverse suppliers and talent available in the market, the opportunity corporates have in the energy transition is to connect and uplift these diverse stakeholders for collective prosperity.
- + DEIJ should be driven internally and externally through structures, processes, and authentic communication.
 - o Internally, it can be supported in the form of human resource policies and activities structured for authentic sharing, such as, storytelling.
 - o Externally, collaborate, influence and mentor within your supply chain, use your corporate and personal power and privilege to signal that DEIJ is important to you and your organization through the procurement process (e.g., via bilateral procurement discussions, or in requests for proposals (RFPS)), and other stakeholder engagement. Augment your engagement by working to uplift diverse suppliers in other ways, such as education, mentorship, and access (e.g., by working with suppliers that actively uplift their diverse suppliers).
- + Diverse suppliers often face two major barriers – access to capital and access to opportunities. By partnering with diverse suppliers, benefits go beyond the one transaction contracted – it promotes wealth creation and growth for the diverse supplier. This growth will yield greater access to opportunities and capital. Corporates can help by:

- Practicing patience - treat DEIJ as an investment in time for more meaningful and direct impact and be committed throughout the entirety of the process – upkeep the same commitment and do not let it fizzle out.
- Track your DEIJ data and progress over time to understand the performance of the programs and strategies deployed. Take it a step further to share the data publicly, inform others in the industry and drive more accountability and engagement on DEIJ. This level of transparency can motivate others to support DEIJ initiatives. Common metrics to measure diversity: diversity in applicant pool, number of diverse suppliers in your supply chain, and percentage spend with diverse suppliers.
- Continuously incorporate DEIJ regardless of the size of projects.
- + Resources and programs to expand your DEIJ knowledge, network, and engagement:
 - [Solar Energy Industries Association](#) issued a set of [Environmental Justice principles](#), offers a [Diverse Supplier](#) database. They will be launching a mentorship program and a 30+ module DEIJ certification program in the latter half of 2021 (to be released at Solar Power International 2021).
 - [Renewables Forward](#) is a CEO collective with a commitment to improve DEIJ. The organization offers resources such as the [HR policy playbook](#) and a business-to-business mentorship program. This program aims to scale and accelerate the diversity in the renewables space by providing diverse suppliers with access to networks and knowledge through authentic connections.
 - [Clean Energy Leadership Institute \(CELI\)](#) promotes equity in clean energy by offering a [fellowship program](#) for emerging leaders and a summer internship program for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) underrepresented, undergraduate students. [Empowering Diversity in Clean Tech – EDICT --](#) is provided in partnership with Elemental Excelsior, and it is unique, because it is as much about providing access to meaningful careers solving climate change as it is about providing host companies with a community of practice focused on learning what action and how to take action to create environments where BIPOC people don't feel like they have to justify their presence.

Speakers

- + [Gilbert Campbell III](#), Co-Founder and CEO at Volt Energy
- + [Yuri Horwitz](#), Co-Founder and CEO at Sol Systems
- + [Dana Sleeper](#), Founder & CEO at The Sleeper Group and DEI Consultant for the Solar Energy Industries Association
- + [Esther Morales](#), Executive Director at Clean Energy Leadership Institute