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Say: Diversity and Inclusion is a Business Imperative

# NBAA-BACE Panelists Say: Diversity and Inclusion is a Business Imperative



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Increasing and encouraging diversity and inclusion in the workforce “isn’t just the right thing to do anymore – It’s a business imperative,” said Annemarie Oxman, chief people officer at NBAA, while moderating a session on the subject at NBAA’s Business Aviation Convention & Exhibition (NBAA-BACE).

Diversity, Oxman explained, is the combination of traits and characteristics that make people unique, while inclusion is the set of behaviors and social norms that ensure people are respected, accepted and encouraged to share ideas and fully participate in an organization.

Kimberly Perkins, international captain and safety officer, and founder of Aviation for Humanity, explained there's a positive correlation between diverse companies and financial returns and diverse groups of team members often reach better decisions faster.

"We have a clear business case for diversity and inclusion," said Perkins.

"Diversity can lead to higher earning potential and possibly an increase in safety through better decision making."

By 2025, 75% of the workforce will be Millennials or Generation Z – generations that place high value on corporate responsibility, including diversity and inclusion. Organizations can create a culture that encourages diversity and inclusion by establishing formal mentoring programs, actively listening to the needs of their employees and implementing company policies that meet those needs.

Tracie Carwile, sales manager of ground transportation at Universal Weather, as well as the first African-American and youngest board member of Women in Corporate Aviation, encouraged attendees to consider their own behaviors.


"Individual accountability is critical because systemic change is so hard," said Carwile.

Panelists said although positive leadership from the top is important for success, all professionals can help create an environment for diversity and inclusion to thrive by communicating with their coworkers. Simply being aware of other people's needs, and willing to have sometimes uncomfortable conversations, is the start.

"We need to empower people to be their authentic selves," said Julius Ramos, aviation sales executive at FlightAware. "It's not about how loudly we talk about inclusion – it's about consistency. Identify commonalities. That's where inclusion starts."

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