



The rise of diversity, equity, and inclusion and the opportunity to do more

Past Event Summary Jul 21, 2022

Diversity, equity, and inclusion aren't just a moral imperative — they're a business imperative.

Since 2015, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) roles **have more than doubled**. Further fueled by the murder of George Floyd and the disparities brought to light by the COVID-19 pandemic, DEI is quickly moving from a “nice to have” to a “must have” for many companies.

In our latest episode of Under the Same Sky, our Founder and CEO, Abner Mason sat down with long-time friend and colleague Juan Fernando Lopera. As Beth Israel Lahey Health's (BILH) first chief DEI officer, Juan oversees the diversity efforts for 13 hospitals, 25 ambulatory facilities, and 36,000 employees.

Juan's journey started as an immigrant from Colombia. At the age of 13, he had the experience many migrant children face, acting as the translator between his parents and their healthcare providers, while struggling with the language himself. His experiences during that time continue to inform the work he does today.

From a consultant role at Deloitte, to working in cost containment at Blue Cross of Massachusetts, to healthcare affordability work at Tufts Health Plan, Juan began his work in DEI in 2015 at Tufts before moving to BILH about a year ago. His key learnings from the last year have centered around the importance of:

1. Setting a clear vision and goals that are ambitious, but grounded in reality.
2. Connecting DEI to company-wide goals or strategic priorities.
3. Being responsive to everyone no matter their level or perspective.

Juan notes that reporting to the CEO gives DEI officers the opportunity to influence decisions not only as they relate to human resources, but also across the organization. Regardless of the industry or business line, there is both a mission and a margin side to DEI. Companies that see both benefit the most.

“ *Many organizations jump into DEI as a moral imperative, but don't have the rigor to look at the business case.*

JUAN FERNANDO LOPERA, CHIEF DEI OFFICER, BILH