

Up To Speed

Friday, June 18, 2021

[MUSIC]

>> Hello and welcome, to "Up to Speed"-live! Today is a very special episode. We are talking about Juneteenth. This is the oldest nationally-celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, and we thought, it was worthy of some exploration and celebration. But before we get to that, by the way, we're going to hit the weekly highlights of all the things we've got on "Up to Speed" live, so Monday, Diego and Nicki broke big news on gaming all sorts of developments, Tuesday we launched "Family Money" and gave you a 10% discount on your next accessory for getting vaccinated Wednesday, we let you in on what dad really wants on father day. And yesterday, Hans and progolfer Tony Finau showed you how to elevate your golf game with AR prointeractive app. Chock full of news for the week, and now let's get back to Juneteenth. Joining me today -- I'm so excited I have so many wonderful guests for you today. Is Kala G. From our network and technology team network automation supervisor but beyond that she is a fabulous leader in BOLD. Our ERG that stands for Black originators leaders and doers they're taking the lead with this year's Juneteenth celebrations. There's been a lot of news around Juneteenth so let's get right to it. CPLR welcome so much to the show, also very pleased to have Wendy Taccetta, leading our nationwide small business and channel chief for Verizon business, rock star you'll see her all over social media. And Shane, leads excellence and cost transformation' on finance team, also a member of the board, first "Up to Speed" appearance we welcome both of you to the show.

So let's talk about Juneteenth starting with the history, so CPLR, can you tell us a little bit about what this holiday is all about for those who may be are unfamiliar with it?

>> Kala: Awesome. So I want to make sure, yes, everyone knows, like, what is Juneteenth. So, in 1863, during the American civil war president Abraham Lincoln, signed the emancipation proclamation, right? We all know that history from grade school; however, what we don't know, and maybe, a lot of people don't know, is that, when he declared, right -- that all enslaved people were to be free, the news did not get down to Texas, and so, more than two years later about two-and-a-half years later, general Granger, came down to Galveston Texas and he issued general order No. 3, which allowed everyone to know hey, yes, all Black Americans, are free. There are no more enslaved Black Americans. And so, it wasn't until then, until the union came down in 1865, two years, again, later, that, the enslaved people knew that they were free in Texas and that's how we celebrate. We say hey, Juneteenth is a day, to celebrate emancipation for us; Juneteenth is, our independence day. It's our Black independence day. So for Juneteenth -- June 19th, 1865 in commemoration of that we celebrate.

>> Diana Alvear: That's wonderful, and I know you have some questions for Shane right now.

>> Kala: Yeah, so I'm really curious, you know, I'm really, really excited about this conversation, because, I get to hear from these amazing Verizon leaders. But, Shane, what does Juneteenth mean to you, like, why is it important?

>> Shane Sanders, SVP, Business Excellence: Yeah, well, Kala, you know, great question, and I guess what I would say, when I think about Juneteenth, it's really about to your point, it's freedom, it's equal rights, and, it's really

the end of slavery in the United States.

And, if you think about it, it's really in my mind, all about freedom. You've heard the term "no one is free until everyone is free."

And I believe that. And it really gives us an student, to be quite honest, to really celebrate all Americans, and freedom.

Not, you know, depending on who you are, what you look like, but all Americans were free, and not only free, but created equally; and I use the operative word "created", right? So I think that's why it's important -- I think the other thing that it reminds us, is that, it's been a struggle for equality. And that struggle has, you know, been passed down through generations and it continues today, but, optimistic, about where the future -- what the future holds. So that's why it's important. At least in my mind.

>> Kala: Absolutely, thank you for that. Yeah, I completely agree that equality freedom, all of that, and growing up, you know, as a celebration, this was something um... that my family celebrated in San Diego, and I think it's been one of those things that Black families have been able to commemorate, and celebrate within our -- within our little groups and family of friends; and so I'm wondering, Shane, and Wendy, how have you celebrated, right? What has that looked like with your families, and any other ways you've observed Juneteenth previously?

>> Wendy Taccetta: So I think, Kala, the celebrations look different over the years. Candidly -- and I think we can all acknowledge this -- we never heard about it in school. And from my family, it's something we heard about at church. It was a celebration on Sunday at church, and we would talk about how important it is that everyone be part of the story.

And, the celebration has often been about friendship. It has also been about lifting each other up, and it has also been about acknowledging where do we

want to go? And what is the hope of tomorrow?

And I think that is so much of the feeling of what you're seeing in celebrations it is your duty today. What you've seen over the last 24 hours has been an acknowledgment that we continue to make progress; and we are certainly not perfect, but that it's a journey that keeps moving forward. And I'm really excited, this year, to see everyone having these discussions, not only at church; but at work. And in school. Because it is the totality of our story as a country, and it's important that we tell the whole story, so that we can all be included.

>> Kala: Thank you, amazing answer!

[LAUGHTER] >> Diana Alvear: Shane, I want to jump in here as I mentioned at the top of the show there was very big news yesterday about Juneteenth, President Biden signing a bill into law establishing June 19th as a national independence day, it is now a U.S. holiday and, in fact, many companies are observing it, I wanted your reaction to that big news, Shane.

>> Shane Sanders: Wow, Diana, I guess what I had to say, I had to reflect, to be quite honest and as I reflected on it, it really, took me back, and, it took me back, to, you know, not only my parents, but my parents' parents; and what it said to me, is that, I matter.

Because I think when you think about the -- the whole signing of the bill, typically, in any organization, or, any country, you celebrate the things that you value.

And so, I look at this as the opportunity, to celebrate the things that we value; and -- and the value, is really, that the Black and the African-American experience, in this country, matters.

And it's mattered as a result of, you know, the -- what I'll call the -- the "celebration" of Juneteenth. And so, that's what it means, that's

what -- that's what I took away from it. It was really, a reflective moment, for me in the point that, we matter.

>> Diana Alvear: That is so profound, and Wendy, I know we were just talking about the big news, can you give us your reaction?

>> Wendy Taccetta: Yeah, it's been an interesting moment of reflection, I think Shane's word is well-chosen, because there are many moments in our country's history, we could choose to memorialize. I think this one is important, because, it represents who we want to be.

A place, where no one gets left behind. And, as we've gone through the last several years, where people disagree on so much, it really creates some space for us, to reflect.

That there was a time, when we said people were free, but they weren't. There was a time, when we said that we were equal, but we weren't. And I think Shane's comment around... our parents and the existence of how we got here -- if you look at Opal Lee, she is 94 years old, she was born a free woman but was not born a woman who could vote. And we continue to move forward as a country; and we have to acknowledge that while, we aren't where we could be.... and we certainly, aren't where we should be, we aren't where we were.

And I love that this gives us a moment, to talk about, how do we continue to create a place, and a country, where everyone is included in our story, and everyone is included in the hope of the future?

And, it's an acknowledgment that we're not there yet.

And if we only talk about the moments that were wonderful in our history, we lose the opportunity to reach for more. So I really am excited about the conversations we're having in boardrooms and churches, and communities and schools --

Because, wouldn't it be great if our children came up in a world, where everyone

is part of what happens tomorrow?

>> Diana Alvear: You know, I'm so proud of the conversations we've been having at Verizon, about all of these kinds of topic, speaking of American history, last year in our series, David Hubbard and our legal team and public policy team hosted a great conversation with Dr. Khalil Gibran Muhammad a professor of public policy, race and American history at the Harvard Kennedy School; and Kala, you hosted -- oh, my gosh! That conversation that you had with Dr. Clarence Jones, a speechwriter and personal friend of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., along with Reyma K., our chief vice president and strategy officer, and heard it in your face, and heard it in your voice, tell us what that was like.

>> Kala: wow it was amazing as my grandpa Jones, he's adopted me at this point. Have the same birthday. It all makes sense, but I think really for me, looking -- even looking and reflecting in this moment, it was, really, emotional, because I think it was one of those first conversations, from someone who has been doing this work, for so long.

You know, really, empowering this next generation, and including myself, and, really, inspiring me, and I think in that moment, because, of so many things going on, you know, during the year, I needed that in that moment and I think a lot of people needed that and then for our allies it was such an educational opportunity, right? It was an invitation to learn. It was an invitation to walk hand in hand, with the Black community, for all of these kinds of initiatives; and spread awareness, and do the work that's needed.

Kala: So I -- I definitely am so, that's, like, one of my career life highlights, you know, (laughing) being able to speak with him for sure, so, yeah!

>> Diana Alvear: Yeah, I think that part of that, though, one of the beautiful

things about that conversation, that you both shared, just goes to highlight the work that you've been doing along with the rest of -- your teammates at BOLD. We have to talk about this, work on voter registration, participation in the sense of virtual march on Washington last year. By the way, one of our most popular events in the volunteer portal. I participated. I'm getting chills just thinking about it! So Kala! What do we have planned for Juneteenth?

>> Kala: Yassss! Juneteenth, you know you-all we had to bring it this year, especially with this amazing announcement yesterday. But yes BOLD is moving beyond the conversation this year. Yesterday we talked about financial literacy, so make sure you check out that replay, but today, right after this program, we're going to host our first all Black women's panel, all Black women business-owners, they're amazing. We've got Michelle Williams from FinTech in action and code 214, we've got Mica King actually plays the mother from "Euphoria" on HBO, and amazing people, t. Parker is going to be hosting this panel is really focused on our socioeconomics and what can we do, as Wendy was talking about to move forward? To look forward, to think more futuristic. And so, I'm excited about that. And then BOLD Yahoo! is actually doing an amazing program, called the soul of America. At 3:00 p.m. eastern; and so you can check out all of that in your e-mail. It was sent out yesterday from Inside Verizon. All of the programs are listed there, so you can find the links and RSVP, there's even a couple of external events that we have highlighted there as well. So lots going on as you can tell!

[LAUGHTER]

>> Diana Alvear: Yeah, and it blows me away how much BOLD does. I mean, this is all extra time you-all are putting in because you're passionate about this, and you are educating the rest of us on all of this so our thanks for you for

all the hard work you've been doing and I have a question for Wendy, because I know how passionate you are about small business. And I wanted to know what is your team doing to champion small businesses especially the Black-owned businesses?

>> Wendy Taccetta: This is, like, my favorite topic! Okay!

Um, you know, I'm so proud of Verizon, and the work we've done over the last year. I think a lot of companies have said that they want to bring communities along. I think we have put our money and our wallet, and our leadership -- behind our message.

So whether it was the work that we did with small business concerts. Whether it was the donations that we've made in to communities and whether it is the incredible work that is led by our foundation. We are helping businesses figure out how to survive and thrive, right now.

Because, it's different. Coming out of COVID means it's not the same old world we had. You have to be virtual. You have to have an agile solution! You have to be able to deliver a stellar customer experience!

Because people only want to leave their homes, if it's going to be worth it. So you've got to level up that experience, and then, I think, the fact that security should be top-of-mind for everyone -- you know, if -- if companies the size of the gap companies can have ransomware attack we know that any business can. So it's great if you are an expert hairdresser, that is wonderful. You don't need to be an expert on technology, we are doing workshops every Friday, we do small business Friday in our stores. We have stores in 7600 locations, across the country.

Wherever your community is, we are. Come into our locations and let us evaluate your tech. Let us show you what you don't know, and let us show you how easy it is to upgrade your experience, you know, I like to think about it like

this: Let your small business feel big, and we can help you do that. So, rose is doing some incredible work around how do we ignite business owners? How do we teach them financial literacy, how do we teach them about how you need to have a web site, because here's one of the stats that every small business owner should know. 85% of people say if they call a small business and they don't answer, they'll never call you back. So being connected, wherever you are, is the most vital thing you can do as a small business owner and that means you need a reliable network, and we are delivering that, whether you are in Bronx, or whether you are in California. Or whether you are in rural America -- we have the network and the distribution that is here to support you. And I would -- I would be remiss not to make a plug for our teammates in consumer. We are in your communities. We live in your communities, and we care about you and your businesses, we can help this country come back faster. We can help small businesses come back faster, just give us a chance to help you and we are here, we are here, our doors are open, come visit us.

>> Diana Alvear: I love that commitment at the ground level. You know, because that's where the real change happens, person-to-person, realizing that there truly is that deep-seated commitment to helping the small businesses grow. I love that Wendy, thank you so much. I'm going to turn to you, following the auction, the treasury team spoke of making sure how DEI firms were able to participate in that capital raise. That was a big deal and I was happy to see that it hit the headlines because that's a big commitment, there. So can you tell me what the finance team is doing, internally to cultivate that next generation of diverse leaders?

>> Shane Sanders, SVP, Business Excellence: Absolutely, Diana and I'm really excited to be quite honest to talk a little bit about what we are doing in finance. And I think -- and I want to just commend the leadership team within

finance for opening kind of their minds, and hearts to -- to really kind of, championing the issue around this, we've had great support around it, I'm optimistic in terms of what we're doing, so we've continued a lot in terms of, you know, some of the courageous conversations, amongst the different groups. We continue to have more purposeful conversations, in terms of talent. We -- Matt has really challenged the organization around talent and having more purposeful conversations. And then we've also established some initiatives around diversity that are being led by some of the Black directors within Finance. Which, I think, will be -- as we move in to this, we'll yield, you know, a lot of results as we move forward; so, I'm excited about it. The grassroots is where it really starts; and really, there are three things that we have talked about in terms of what we think will make really, a difference. And it's really around how do we think about finance leadership oversight? So you -- you only -- you have to measure what you expect, right? And so, I think that's critical. We're in process of putting some things, in place. We talked a lot about sponsorship and mentorship. So sponsorship is much different than mentorship. So the ability to -- to be willing to take someone under your wings, and sponsor them, as we get into these conversations, as we provide, real opportunities for individuals, I think is really important. And so, making the distinction there between, sponsorship, and mentorship, will actually be critical. And then how do we really -- we call it "intervention." What interventions do we need to make? In terms of leveraging a lot of the -- the tools that we have as an organization, I think it's important -- how do we leverage those? How do we make the connections across the different organizations, and with even some of the -- the reachout to, for instance, HBCUs? So, I'm excited. I think the team is excited. A lot to do, by the way! We're by no means, where we want to be.

And I think that's really been the challenge for us is how do we maintain the momentum, not only within the organization, but within Finance to continue to focus on building really, Black, diverse talent within finance. And as you know, with finance folks we're all about the numbers, so, part of the -- part of the exercise was really, looking at the data. And looking at where we are, so that we can measure kind of our progress toward the future; so, optimistic, excited. But a lot of work left to do.

>> Diana Alvear: Thank you, and I would like to ask one last question that I can -- I would love to -- on a call to action, letting people know what they can do, in addition to what BOLD is doing and all these different activities I want all three of you very briefly to tell me how people can be better allies and I'm going to start with you, Shane.

>> Shane Sanders, SVP, Business Excellence: I would say, you know, in order to really be a better ally, I think it's really just -- part of it is just listening and making yourself available and vulnerable.

Because I think that is, really, a way to increase allieship, and not being afraid; so sometimes, you have to take the risk and if you never take the risk, I'm not sure how allieship even works so I think that's really important as we think about allieship, as you think about mentorship. As you think about sponsorship.

It's really -- taking the risk. And opening yourself up. And listening. Is really critical, I think, for, you know, making progress.

>> Diana Alvear: Thank you, Shane, how about you, Kala?

>> Kala:

Yeah, that's a great question. I think what I think about, when I -- you know, think -- talking to my colleagues aboutb allieship, is I feel like, they think it's, like, this big undertaking. Right? And they've got to read 15 books,

in a month, and get educated on all these things, and it really isn't that. It really is, one step at a time, every day, taking a self-check-in, right? with all of the things that you do and you say in your own community at your own dinner table, right? What are those conversations?

What do those things look like when you're teaching your kids about what antiracism is?

and really becoming ally and an abolitionist, deciding after you've done education for yourself and your family and within your little circle of community is you go out, and you go and hang out with people that don't look like you. And get involved in the things that are really in the community, that make a difference. Right?

I think that is really what I would say, for -- if there was a call to action, it's, like, look at your family. Look at yourself. And then go out, hand in hand, with other people, again, that don't look like you, the Black community, the Asian American community, and really get to work.

>> Diana Alvear: I love that. And Wendy, of course, we'll end with you, so your brief thoughts on how to be a better ally.

>> Wendy Taccetta: I think a few things: Probably the most important for me is that allies, is active.

You cannot be an ally, who calls later and says, "I believe that happened." That is not allies. It is what you do in that moment. And, despite your fears, it is letting someone know that I see you, and I am -- I am speaking, and standing up with you.

I think the second piece, is, it is about the education. And, people think they have to run the whole marathon, in one day. It's lots of people who have heard about Juneteenth and went, "I don't know about this, but I'm afraid to say I don't know about it." Welcome to Google. It's okay.

Go out there, and do some research. Go and visit the national museum of African-American studies online, take a tour. Just learn a little bit more than you knew yesterday. And then I have a note that sits on my desk that says, I want to live a challenged life. And my advice to you is a little bit of what Kala and Shane have said. Get into rooms, where the conversation is different than the one you've been having for the last three years. Whether that means that the people look different, whether that means they have different experiences, or whether that means that they are people you would never have met before.

Just get into some new conversations, and open your viewpoint. And I think you'll find that we have more in common than not. And the only way -- and I hope what everybody takes out of Juneteenth is that there is a tomorrow that is better than yesterday, and it includes all of us. And if we can all just come to the table together, I think we'll like what we see.

>> Diana Alvear: Oh, I love that. Definitely, more listening, more action, and more. ... togetherness. I think that that's just a beautiful way to end this Juneteenth celebration. I can't thank all of you enough, Kala, Wendy and Shane, for opening your hearts and walking us through this special day, and just a few other news items we would like to mention, because it's related. So "Moment to Movement" is really moving. Genia Wilbourn led an awesome discussion with four "Moment to Movement" team members on what diversity data showed. Why the team is committed to driving progress and what we're actually doing so let's take a look at the clip.

[ON VIDEO]

Genia Wilbourn · Senior Vice

President - Verizon Global

Network Ops & Assurance. How

does this work that we're doing, in this time and day and the things that's going on in this society? why does it matter in what we're trying to accomplish? and, Tim, I'll start with you, just your personal perspective.

>> Tim Dykstra: It matters, because it's the right time and the right place; and, everyone deserves the opportunity to work at a company like Verizon. everybody deserves the same opportunities that have been given to all of us to work at such a great company that gives you opportunities to do basically whatever you want to do. Almost work wherever you want to go, because we're not just domestic. We're global as well. So it's that which really has made me tacit about this progress, is fighting for everybody to have all the same opportunities that have given me a remarkable career for 28

years. And going! At Verizon.

>> Genia Wilbourn · Senior Vice

President - Verizon Global

Network Ops & Assurance: I like

that. Fighting for it. That's

a great term to use.

[VIDEO CONCLUDED.]

Diana Alvear: Isn't that great, equality, and opportunity, Genia and team, thank you so much for your sentiments. I want to thank all of my panelists today, for a wonderful conversation, about Juneteenth. You've heard all the different things that you can do. You can watch that replay of the conversation, Genia had, by clicking today's link in today's story. A very happy Father's Day to all the dads out there. We see you, we love you, we appreciate you, we hope you're able to relax, and, a reminder that you can tune in to both celebrating Juneteenth events right after "Up to Speed", so I'm Diana Alvear. I thank you so much for spending a little time with us, to talk about the importance of Juneteenth. We hope you walk away educated informed, and inspired. Until next time, you're "Up to Speed"!