

VERIZON
UP TO SPEED
JULY 7, 2020, 12:00 PM ET

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>> Hello and welcome to Up to Speed. I'm Diana Alvear and we have a packed show for you today. Really good stuff. We have 5G news. Always a good show when we have 5G news and which will be talking about equality. All of the seismic changes happening in America today. We wanted to take it a step further to figure out how do we make progress in the workplace? We spoke to so many really incredible people including Verizon's own lead director, Lawrence Otis. A lot to come on that. Let's jump into that 5G news. Great news for those who are trying to keep your costs down. The Samsung Galaxy A71 5G U-W is coming to Verizon and you can pre-order it this Thursday. At only 649.99.

It's the most affordable. Very smart news there. Speaking of that 5G ultrawide band network, our engineers have found an alternative way of using millimeter wave spectrum. I don't necessarily understand it thank good for smarter people than me. They are able to get the network running even if they don't have the finders in place. This will be a huge help to first responders and public safety agencies who absolutely depend on their devices to work in an emergency. Congrats to them for always doing their part in a crisis and making sure that Verizon network is up and running to keep everybody safe.

We want to turn to the seismic changes as I mentioned that are happening in the country in general when it comes to the workplace. When it comes to seeing more equity and seeing more justice. Verizon is proud to have donated \$10 million split equally among six different groups that are working to advance these causes. Then so many of us are asking, well, where do we go from here? What are the next steps? Some real action that needs to take place in order to make sure that we create a more just environment when it comes to people working in America. I spoke with Clarence Otis, he is our lead director of Verizon's board, and he has decades of experience when it comes to the work environment. I also spoke with Dr. Peniel Joseph, the founder of the center forced study of race and democracy at the University of Texas at Austin. Both of them had so much to say and gave us so much clarity when it comes to this issue.

>> These protests have really taken away all of our illusions about racial progress. They also show us and this is where corporate responsibility comes in, corporations want peace. They want a thriving consumer economy like all of us do. So they want to be part of a solution.

>> People have really woken up to the fact that this is the experience. This crosses every household in black America. And they feel like they are complicit if they don't say or do something. And the people that are feeling like this, our employees and -- are employees and customers of the companies so companies respond.

>> We have to make racial justice the core of the bottom line and also the public face of corporate America. That's Amazon. That's Verizon. That's Wells Fargo. Bank of America. And that's also Silicon Valley and venture capitalists, private equity, Wall Street. Usually they think about black people and people of color just in terms of people who are negligible. People who are not at the center of what they are doing. If we center that and say this is connected to your bottom line in hiring where you will get rewarded for hiring black people and people of color. You will get rewarded for having people at the C-suite level that are usually never at the C-suite level. You will get rewarded for recruiting from historically black colleges and Hispanic serving universities instead of just going to the usual suspects elite colleges and universities that have basically no people of color. Then we can shift that.

>> What I want to see happen is that we put together multi-year points that speak to what are we going to do to make sure that we've got appropriately representative population of African-American employees. Verizon is fortunate because it starts from a position of strength from that perspective. That the actual representation numbers are quite strong. Now the question is, what's the multi-year plan to make sure that people progress inside of the organization.

>> Definitely had to prove yourself. And the way that manifested itself for African-Americans on Wall Street and still does is that you are in that position of having to prove yourself. If you weren't African-American you might get that next promotion, call it five years or three years if you are African-American it's seven years or nine years. You have to be patient enough to wait that out. African-Americans would refer to that as the black tax. That is just the way it is.

You're nominated as high potential by other people then you've already introduced bias into the equation, right? You look at your nomination systems and say, well, are there jobs where I don't rely on people to nominate people who are potentially ready for the next level? I simply assume all of these people are ready for the next level. If they raise their hand and say they are, then I will engage in a process to try to assess their leadership capabilities. Put together a development plan that reflects the gaps that they've got and move them forward.

>> It's the perfect time to hold anybody's personal company including Verizon their feet to the fire. Gave 10 million this year and what's your five in ten year plan of promoting this anti-racism, racial justice boards nationally and globally.

I'm very, very hopeful. I think and have been saying this nationally that we have a generational opportunity to end institutional racism, to defeat white supremacy, to institutionalize black dignity and citizenship. When I say that, I think if we ever institutionalize black dignity and citizenship, people who are Latin X, LGBTQ, Asian, Native American, indigenous, they are all going to be elevated and have that access to citizenship. We are not going to have black dignity and citizenship and all of these people left behind

>> Thank you so much Clarence and Dr. Joseph for giving us some insight into what we can look forward to in the next ten years when it comes to the change that needs to take place.

Now here at Verizon, of course, it's a very special time. We are not only looking back and reflecting on 20 years of incredible progress, we are also looking to the next 20. We are looking to see what the next 20 years hold. This goes beyond technology. This goes beyond everything that Verizon is so good at doing. We are also talking about the social changes that need to be happening. The conversations that need to be taking place. And with that we are so excited to let you know that we are launching the next 20. These are going to be conversations that focus on a variety of topics and that first conversation is launching tomorrow. It's going to focus on criminal justice reform and hosted by Yahoo! news' Marquise Francis.

>> In honor of Verizon's 20th anniversary, this is a new series where we will have conversations about race, social justice, technology and business issues that will define the next 20 years.

>> I'm so excited about these next 20 conversations and fortunately I will be hosting a few of them myself as well. Hopefully you will join in and let us know how you feel about these topics and if there is anything missing and -- and we will be remiss if we didn't talk about the fact that it's been driven by the youngest among us, generation Z. Incredible to see what these kids -- I can call them kids because I'm of that age. What these kids are accomplishing and just inspiring us to do. And I wanted to dive a little deeper into this conversation. So I had the absolute privilege of chatting with a young V-teamer, Alexandria Johnson. She is a media strategy analyst but more importantly she is a committed change maker and, boy, does she have a lot to say and I'm super excited about what's to come.

>> Growing up for generation Z, we were taught that all people were created equal. We were taught that a lot of the things that were of the past, whether that be slavery, Jim Crow, things like that, those were all in the past and this was the new America and this was the new equal system. And as we've learned and tried to educate ourselves we realized that is not the reality. We were painted a false picture of what reality actually was and that's unfair.

>> The energy that's happening now is infusing everything. And it's this idea of, like, let's go out and break stuff and make new things that are better. I'm here for it, you know?

>> Yeah, yeah. And me and my friends we talk about to educate yourself on what systems are in place, you know how to dismantle them in order to create something new and I think that's kind of where we are at with society. We are realizing it does not work. The system does not work for all of us. How can we reconstruct it in order for it to let everybody have the equal opportunity at the same types of lifestyles as others. To me it's not just about having a diversity and inclusion team. Having a recruitment team, having this team or that team. What is that entire process look like through and through that ensures and holds people accountable to making sure we see success in our community.

>> I have often been the only Latina in the workplace, I'm the only Latina in the newsroom or the only Latina in this particular workplace. And then I get asked, well, what do Latinos think? I don't know. I'm one of how many?

>> When you are in the room and only person of color, it's hardest to have your voice heard. It's harder for people to understand and relate to your experience because they have never probably had that.

There is no shared experience there. So my thing is that when it comes to having more people in the room, it's more about diversity and experience and diversity of thought.

>> You are very much at the beginning of your career but clearly have a beautiful career ahead of you. What kind of changes need to happen when it comes to hiring and promoting and grooming for leadership, especially at the C-suite level.

>> I see so many people even ten years older than me and 20 years older than me saying how this is going to cycle of an experience for them and I realize that I don't want it to be a cycle for me. I don't want this to be a cycle for the next person of color that come through this door no matter where I'm at. I never want that to be something that they have to experience. It is a process that I think at its foundation needs to be worked at for all companies. It's not just a recruitment thing. It's not just on recruiters and not just on hiring managers. It's about how do you create this pipeline process from, okay, yes, they got recruited and they got the job. How do we make sure that they get the skills to get to that next job? How do we empower them to get to that next and then the next and the next role, you know what I'm sayin'?

>> I want you to look forward at 15 to 20 years and what do you envision for yourself? What do you envision for the workplace and society?

>> Our generation is very entrepreneurial or do it ourselves type of person. I built out a blog that ran for almost three years where I interviewed entrepreneurs and interviewed people who were at the really cool positions in the world and they were all under 25. And I think that was a turning point in my college journey. It made me go harder and made me understand, wait a minute, there are so many other possibilities for my life beyond what I'm doing right now and beyond what people have told me is possible for me. So I do want to just say that definitely made a difference.

>> Oh!

Girl, you gave me chills right now. I love that.

>> And it made a difference.

>> So right, having the opens and the opportunities. To looking for those opportunities as opposed to accepting what comes your way. No, you can make your way and that's what I love about this new generation is that you have grown up with the possibility of making your own way.

And that's such an entrepreneur approach to everything. And I feel like we are also seeing this entrepreneurial approach to progress. Listen, we are just going to make it happen.

>> I want us to run toward change, run toward equality because that's what we need for those -- for the 15 years from now. That's exactly what we need. From an individual level I will be running. I'm still going to be running then. From a community level I'm going to be hoping that people are jogging right next to me. I'm going to hope there is support and ensuring that it's a consistent thing because that is what we need is consistency. We don't want things to go back in time. We want to be sure we are looking forward and looking forward in a positive light.

>> And as you can see the kids are definitely all right. And Verizon's future is in the right hands.

Thank you so much for spending time with me today. I'm Diana Alvear. Don't forget that next 20 conversation that's going to be a good one and so much more to come. As always. Until next time. You're Up to Speed.