



**SOMEONE'S DOING  
OUTSTANDING WORK AT SHRM**

**Shirley Davis, Ph.D.,** has a lot on her plate as Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives for the **Society for Human Resource Management, or SHRM.**

*This former model, a self-described beauty-pageant buff at heart, learned how to compete at an early age, and perhaps her pageant experiences gave her the ambition and determination to earn a Master's degree in HR Management and then a Ph.D. in Business Management.*

*A highly sought-after speaker, Dr. Davis knows diversity and inclusion inside out. But there's more to her than her HR knowledge, extensive though it may be. She's also a leadership expert, a mentor, a wise strategist and a visionary. Who better to lead the D&I efforts at the membership organization that serves more than 230,000 HR professionals worldwide?*

**Please describe your organization's global presence. Describe the scope and scale of SHRM to a reader who may not be familiar with it.**

Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 225,000 individual members in over 125 countries. We have a network of more than 575 affiliated chapters in the United States as well as offices in China and India. SHRM's mission is twofold: 1) to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most current and

comprehensive resources, thought leadership, strategies, and professional development, and 2) to advance the profession by promoting HR's essential, strategic role.

**How would you define workplace diversity and inclusion as it relates to the efforts within your organization?**

Workplace Diversity is the collective mixture of differences and

similarities that includes, for example, individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences and behaviors.

Inclusion is the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully; have equal access to opportunities and resources; and can contribute fully towards the organization's success.

**What are the main components of your D&I program? Is the management of D&I programs largely U.S.-based or present throughout the worldwide organization?**

SHRM's Diversity and Inclusion Initiative is one of our strategic business imperatives and is a key focus in our business operating plan, our divisional goals, and all business processes. These would include Human Resources, Professional Development, Publications, Marketing, Government/Public Affairs, International Strategy, and Member Relations, to name a few.



**ORGANIZATION NAME:**  
 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
 1800 Duke Street; Alexandria, VA 22314

**WEB SITE:** www.shrm.org

**PRIMARY BUSINESS OR INDUSTRY:**  
 HumanResources membership organization

**MEMBERS WORLDWIDE:**  
 Over 230,000 in over 125 countries

PROFILES IN DIVERSITY JOURNAL  
*Front-Runners*  
IN DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Office of Diversity and the The Diversity Advisory Council (DAC) collaborate on strategy.

The D&I Initiative is also included in our Balanced Score Card, which tracks and measures our success against goals. A percentage of incentive compensation is tied to the achievement of these goals. Our D&I efforts have largely been U.S.-focused as that's where the majority of our membership needs have originated. However, SHRM recognizes that we are in a global marketplace. In fact, we implemented an internationalization strategy several years ago. Currently SHRM has offices in China and India and has plans to continue to explore business opportunities in additional global markets.

**How do you keep diversity a priority throughout the organization? Specifically, how do you energize people or get their buy-in for diversity?**

In all of our strategic efforts, we have found that the best way to sustain employee engagement and buy-in is to include them in the development of the efforts up front, solicit their ongoing input, recognize their efforts, celebrate successes, and keep them informed.

We keep diversity as a priority at SHRM by making it part of our business operating plan, meaning every division is responsible for some aspect of diversity in their business goals. These goals are tied to our organization's Balanced Score Card and tracked. On a monthly basis, in our all-employee meetings, our CEO, Sue Meisinger, provides updates on our progress towards goals. On a quarterly basis, our diversity efforts and progress is presented to the SHRM Board. Additionally, our internal communications department ensures that our strategic initiatives are clearly communicated and accessible to all employees via our intranet site.

**HERE ARE SOME** additional tactics we employ to keep diversity a priority:

- Each year the Employee Engagement Survey or a Pulse Survey is administered to all employees. It assesses their satisfaction and engagement in a wide range of areas, including respect, inclusion, and diversity. Staff training is an ongoing event with leadership training occurring each year for senior leaders.
- The Office of Diversity works very closely with the Diversity Advisory Council (DAC), which is made up of employees representing all divisions within SHRM, and our Chief Financial Officer, Hank Jackson, who acts as executive sponsor.
- We continue to provide diversity-related programming designed to build a more inclusive culture. For example, in 2007 the DAC hosted several panel discussions on "hot topics" that were important to our employees. We also hosted events with guest speakers on topics such as people with disabilities, lesbians/gays in the workplace, cultural competence, leader-



The DAC represents employees from all divisions across SHRM.

ship styles, and generational diversity. Additionally, we built awareness and recognition of the various cultures and countries represented by our employees at our annual International Day, and celebrated our employees with military service on Veteran's Day. An intranet site houses diversity-related articles and resources for employees, and members of the DAC participated in external events on behalf of SHRM.

These activities, while educational, are also designed to build employee engagement, support, and buy-in for SHRM's diversity efforts. According to employee feedback, these events are thought provoking, lots of fun, and at times, they push the envelope by addressing highly charged and sensitive topics in a carefully crafted way that preserves employee respect. Evaluations from these activities continue to inform us on how we can take our efforts to the next level.

For our membership we keep diversity a priority in similar ways. We offer cutting edge research, thought leadership, tools, and strategies on diversity management and associated issues. Much of these offerings are accessible online 24 hours a day 7 days a week for our members worldwide. Additionally, we offer numerous professional development opportunities such as courses, seminars, HR certification and an annual Workplace Diversity Conference that enables our members to build an in-depth knowledge of the latest trends and competitive practices in HR and Diversity.

As Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives for SHRM, I work with more than 260 state, chapter and regional diversity directors. They are provided the necessary resources and tools in order to develop and execute diversity strategies in their chapters. I also lead the SHRM

Photos this page by Steven Purcell



Facilitating Diversity and Inclusion Training for SHRM's Senior Leadership Team.



Collaborating with SHRM's Chief Operating Officer, China Gorman.

Workplace Diversity Expertise Panel, which is a group of 15 diversity experts, practitioners, and consultants from around the world who help us advance our diversity efforts conducting research, writing white papers, and developing strategy for both members and non-members alike.

## CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

### What resources (financial and manpower) are allocated to diversity? How do these reflect SHRM's leadership commitment to diversity?

The Office of Diversity consists of a full-time Director, a Project Coordinator, a Manager of Diversity and Inclusion (candidates are currently being recruited), and a part-time Intern. Additionally, more than 260 diversity directors (non-paid volunteer leaders) are appointed to lead diversity efforts in their state and local chapters, working collaboratively with the Office of Diversity. Each year, SHRM invests millions of dollars in its diversity efforts, including staff resources, conferences, seminars, marketing and advertising, sponsorships, research, reports, recruiting, training, and more.

### Does SHRM address diversity in its annual report? Is it important to talk about diversity with shareholders?

Yes. SHRM believes in the importance of keeping our members, Board members, staff, volunteer leaders, and the public informed on our important focus areas. Diversity is one of them. Facets of our diversity efforts are included in our annual report, in our annual Workplace Diversity Conference and in every major annual event we host. In Town Hall meetings facilitated by our CEO, Susan Meisinger, diversity is consistently addressed in her presentations and during member Q&As.

In quarterly Board meetings, updates on SHRM's diversity efforts are highlighted. Part of the SHRM Web site is devoted specifically to diversity and diversity-related topics and issues. Diversity is discussed during monthly employee meetings, executive and senior leadership meetings and is a featured section in the monthly *SHRM HR Magazine*.

### Is diversity a compensable annual objective for the executive management team? How do you reward special initiatives? What accountability do you employ to meet objectives?

Yes. If SHRM achieves its objectives under the diversity initiative and the other strategic initiatives, a percentage of incentive compensation is awarded to staff. Additionally, Employee Engagement Survey results specific to leadership competencies and building an inclusive, respectful and diverse workplace are tied to senior leaderships' incentive compensation.

### Do you have any programs in place to increase the cross-cultural competence of your senior management team? Can mid-level managers acquire similar training?

In 2007, SHRM employed a consulting firm to assess the senior management team's cultural competence. The firm identified specific behaviors that high performing leaders demonstrate when building inclusive high performing organizations. In a three-hour session, we outlined specific techniques and strategies that our leaders could use to increase their effectiveness. For example, leaders are encouraged to mentor others who are different from them and to keep an open mind for allowing mutual learning. As a result of the training, SHRM is instituting a learning community process that enables monthly discussions in small groups to explore issues related to Diversity and Inclusion and other leadership practices. Additionally, training is provided for all SHRM employees throughout the year as well as through professional development opportunities outside of the organization.

### When hiring or promoting people, how do you ensure that the individual selected was chosen from a diverse group of candidates?

Our ultimate objective in hiring, selecting, and promoting people is to ensure that we've been prudent, fair, inclusive, and consistent in our practices. That means in addition to seeking the best skills, qualifications, backgrounds, education, and work experiences, we also value and appreciate diverse ideas, thoughts, personalities, communication styles, and approaches to work.

We continue to examine the makeup of our organization to deter-



Interviewing one of the pioneers in the field, Dr. R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr.



Photos this page by Ralph Alswang

mine where we have opportunities to increase diversity, and we go to great lengths to ensure that our recruitment and selection processes are enhanced as needed. We pride ourselves on having a diverse staff. We encourage our employees and members to refer the best talent for open positions; we calibrate our decisions internally to ensure that the best and fairest decision is made; we partner with external organizations to expand our reach to a more diverse workforce (through recruitment, sponsorships, advertisements, marketing, partnerships/alliances, outreach, etc.); and we participate in a number of other external activities that build on our company brand.

**How are decisions about diversity made in your organization? Is there a diversity council and who heads it up? Who participates?**

The strategic direction (including staffing and budgeting) of SHRM's diversity initiative is made in a collaborative way among the senior and executive teams and the Board.

Operational decisions about diversity are shared among division heads across the organization. For example, Bob Carr, our Chief Professional Development Officer, makes decisions regarding new business opportunities and educational programming, such as diversity courses, seminars, and conferences. Gary Rubin, our Chief Publications Officer, makes decisions regarding our publications online and in print.

My role as Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives is to work closely with all of the division heads, our CEO and the Board to ensure that our diversity efforts are integrated, have continuity and are in keeping with our mission: Serve the Professional and Advance the Profession.

**What evidence makes you confident that you and your team have developed momentum for the organization in the right direction? What is the vision for SHRM in five years?**

In the past year, we've seen tremendous momentum for our diversity efforts as evidenced by an increase in attendance and sponsorships at our SHRM Workplace Diversity Conference. We've also seen additional traffic online in the SHRM diversity focus area, including Webcasts, documents accessed and downloaded, and bulletin board participation. Diversity offerings at our chapter and state conferences around the country are increasing, as are requests for our senior staff to provide presentations and speeches on diversity-related topics through our speakers bureau.



Davis and Jai Rodriguez, star of *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*.

What's more, survey and evaluation feedback we receive from members and staff on various diversity programs and events is overwhelmingly positive, and the number of requests for media interviews to discuss our Diversity Initiative and diversity-related issues continues to rise. We have received a lot of recognition and affirmation from colleagues and experts on the direction that SHRM is heading with its diversity initiative.

SHRM's vision for its diversity efforts is to be a recognized leader in providing thought leadership, strategies, competitive practices, resources, and professional development to business professionals.

**EMPLOYEE INCLUSIVENESS**

**How does your company gauge inclusion of employees? What are the tests, measurements and benchmarks (metrics) that indicate where the company is on the inclusion graph?**

Each year the Employee Engagement Survey or a Pulse Survey is administered to all employees to assess their level of satisfaction and engagement in areas such as leadership, respect, inclusion, and diversity.

**How are employees' opinions solicited and valued? Do you have a 'suggestion box' or other system, and who monitors and responds?**

We have a very collaborative culture and, as a result, we seek input from employees on a consistent basis. A suggestion box, located in HR, allows employees to provide new ideas and ways to improve business processes and policies and is reviewed on a monthly basis.

## *Shirley Davis, Ph.D.*

### **Organization**

Society for Human Resource Management

### **Title**

Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

### **Years in current position**

1.5

### **Education**

Bachelor's degree in pre-law; Master's degree in Human Resource Administration; Ph.D. in Business and Organization Management

### **First job**

Front office receptionist in a doctor's office; Model

### **Philosophy**

Better to be prepared for an opportunity and never have one, than to have an opportunity and not be prepared. Treat every opportunity as a God-given gift to either be a blessing or to receive a blessing.

### **What I'm reading**

Articles on HR and Diversity to stay abreast of the latest research and trends; *Reposition Yourself*, by T.D. Jakes; *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, by Marshall Goldsmith.

### **Family**

A 13-year-old daughter and three siblings. I'm the oldest; I have three brothers. I'm a daddy's girl and mom is my best friend. We have a very close-knit family.

### **Interests**

My personal motto is to live life with purpose and passion and to leave this life (when it's time) with no regrets of what I should have or could have accomplished. I love motivational speaking, and I've had the opportunity over the past ten years to speak across the country and internationally. I spend quality time with my daughter whose interests include soccer, debate team, singing competitions, plays, and modeling. She's a real chip off the old block!

I'm a pageant buff at heart. I started competing in pageants at age 13 at the local, state and national levels and was fortunate enough to win several state and national titles in the Ms. America United States, Model Star Searches, Miss Petite International, Miss USA and Mrs. America pageants. Today, I still watch, attend, and judge pageants. I also commit quite a bit of time to church, community and civic activities; I'm a leadership coach; I'm writing two books that I hope to release later this year; and I love traveling for leisure (day spas, beach resorts, etc.).

### **Childhood hero**

Parents and grandparents.

### **"Best" picture (film/art)**

Too many to name.

### **My music**

Oldies-but-Goodies R&B of the '70s and '80s; gospel and jazz.

### **Favorite game**

Spades, Scrabble

### **Desk-drawer munchies**

Snickers, Oreo cookies

### **Favorite charities**

The SHRM Foundation. I'm a Board member for the Metro DC chapter of Dress for Success. My church (missions and women's group).

### **Person (historical/fictional/actual) I'd like to get to know over lunch**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



PROFILES IN DIVERSITY JOURNAL  
*Front-Runners*  
IN DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP SERIES

One exciting part of my job is getting to meet wonderful people, such as Chris Gardner, the inspiration behind the movie *The Pursuit of Happiness*, starring Will Smith.



Photos this page by Ralph Alswang

Welcoming a conference attendee who traveled from Bulgaria.



Additionally, each month all employees attend a meeting hosted by the CEO. This is an open forum for employees to ask questions and hear company updates. However, at any time, employees are encouraged to bring suggestions to HR, the CEO, the COO, or any senior leader. They can do it face to face, via e-mail, or through the company's intranet site.

**How do you deal with those who perceive inclusion programs for underrepresented groups as being exclusionary for others? Have you encountered this attitude?**

I have dealt with this resistance throughout my tenure in the diversity management field, and I've seized the opportunities to bring clarity to what diversity and inclusion is and is not. While it is important to ensure that our organizations reflect a diverse society, I also recognize that diversity already exists. Even when you have a very homogeneous group, you have diversity in terms of backgrounds, thoughts, religions, experiences, family status, sexual orientation, etc.

But it's also important to have a visibly diverse organization. Since we are operating in a global marketplace where we sell to and buy from diverse customers, we must be able to meet their individual needs. Having a talented and diverse workforce that understands these needs can be a competitive advantage and key differentiator for organizations today.

Regarding Employee Network Groups, research has revealed over and over that employees need and seek out a sense of belonging through networking and building relationships. They want to know how to be successful in the organization and how to navigate through the unknown land mines.

Oftentimes, if one is in a minority group in the organization, the dominant groups tend not to share this information with them. Having informal networks among people who have mutual needs and interests builds that sense of belonging, support, and camaraderie that is needed—not just to survive but, more importantly, to thrive in an organization. Where the inclusion

comes in is that all Employee Network Groups should have open membership and encourage all employees to participate.

Diversity and Inclusion programs, like any business strategy, should always look at where there are gaps in the organization and how those gaps might affect the organization's ability to compete in the marketplace, recruit and retain good talent in the workforce, and to reinvent itself over time. If one of those gaps is that there is a lack of men, women, people of color, people over 40, people with good management skills, people who speak multiple languages, Generation Y, engineers, people with technical skills, or different personalities (I can go on and on), the organization should make the necessary adjustments to ensure that it has the right balance and alignment to be successful in a global marketplace.

When you define diversity and inclusion the way I do, which is not limited to just race and gender, it is not exclusionary at all. It is clearly about everyone.

**Can you name specific ways SHRM supports upward development toward management positions?**

Through a succession planning process, SHRM identifies potential talent for open and future management positions. Our internal posting process, which posts all internal director and below openings, allows employees to express their interest in management positions and also encourages senior leaders to identify great talent.

And, of course, performance management and the calibration process is an opportunity to identify potential talent for immediate and long term staffing needs. In 2007, SHRM supported its entire leadership team in attending leadership training and taking leadership assessments. A number of our leaders attended the Center for Creative Leadership. Additionally, SHRM allocates a generous budget for both internal and external employee development. And the tuition assistance program, which covers all employees including those who work part time, also includes master's and doctorate degrees.





**October 27-29, 2008**  
**Atlanta, Georgia**

**SHRM**<sup>TM</sup>

SOCIETY FOR HUMAN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

# Inspiration in Atlanta

The 2008 Workplace Diversity & Exposition Conference

**Here's what some of the 2007 attendees had to say about the conference:**

*"Since I come from an employer that is not very diverse, I questioned what I would learn from this conference. I came home with a lot of useful information – great conference!"*

Jan Souder,  
Heritage Medical Group

*"Great material was discussed and the opportunity to collaborate with other HR professionals was completely outstanding."*

Michael Miller,  
Schwans Consumer Brands

## **SHRM's 2007 Workplace Diversity & Exposition Conference Was Exciting!**

Marlee Matlin, Grace Odums, Jai Rodriguez and Chris Gardner electrified audiences with their thought provoking messages.

## **And 2008 Workplace Diversity & Exposition Conference promises to be even better!**

Save the dates of **October 27-29, 2008** for this important conference being held this year in Atlanta, Georgia.

## **The SHRM Diversity Initiative**

The SHRM Diversity Initiative, established in 1993, seeks to foster awareness and appreciation of workplace diversity issues among HR professionals, their employers and other business leaders.

The primary purpose of the initiative is to assist SHRM members in managing a diverse workforce by providing diversity-related research materials, workplace-applicable tools, publications and linkages with other organizations.

Making the business case for diversity and valuing individual differences are the cornerstones of SHRM's Diversity Initiative.

**For more information visit [www.shrm.org/diversity](http://www.shrm.org/diversity).**