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The Diversity Lab Story

Five years ago, in 2014, we launched the OnRamp Fellowship with the goal of replenishing the pipeline of women in law. Although “returnships” were already part of the culture in other industries, law had yet to adopt them. Four forward-thinking law firms were early adopters of the experimental idea to bring diverse lawyers back into the fold after an extended hiatus from the workforce. The inaugural pilot was so successful that law firm leaders asked us for additional new and creative ways to boost diversity and inclusion. Diversity Lab was born!

To involve and inspire others to join us in this experimental approach, in 2016 we created the Women in Law Hackathon — in partnership with Bloomberg Law and Stanford Law School — to generate innovative ideas for solving law’s diversity challenge. Law firm partners from across the U.S. worked in teams for six months to brainstorm their solutions, which were presented at a “Shark Tank” style pitch event at Stanford Law School. The Mansfield Rule, OnTrack, SMART, and CompFirmation were all created through the Hackathon.

To implement and test these Hackathon ideas, we created an Alliance of four dozen law firms that pledged to pilot the initiatives in 2017-2018 and share lessons learned. The Mansfield Rule, for example, was piloted by nearly 50 firms and showed early success with 40% of the firms boosting diversity in leadership in the first year.

Because of the overwhelming demand from law firms — as well as legal departments — to generate more innovative ideas, we built and facilitated the Diversity in Law Hackathon series in 2018 in partnership with Bloomberg Law, Harvard Law School Executive Education, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and UC Hastings College of the Law. More than 100 law firm partners and legal departments leaders worked together for four months to create an astounding 19 new ideas to increase diversity and inclusion in law, ranging from tech solutions, to inclusion nudges, to pay parity data collection.

Over the course of 2019-2020, we will pilot many of the new Hackathon ideas with an ever-growing number of law firms and legal departments. We will also continue to hone and improve the initiatives from the first Hackathon, including the Mansfield Rule and OnTrack.

As a community — with experimental ideas, measurement of outcomes, and knowledge sharing as the foundation — we are determined to move the needle on diversity in hopes of skyrocketing law to first on the list of the world’s most diverse professions.
“Participating in the OnRamp Fellowship has been nothing short of life-changing for me. After having been out of the workforce for over two decades, I did not think it was possible for me to ever get back into a law firm, much less a firm as prestigious as Sidley. OnRamp changed all that and provided me with the encouragement, tools, and support to not only land the job, but to succeed.”

Pam Zdunek, Sidley

Background

The OnRamp Fellowship is a re-entry platform that matches experienced lawyers returning to the workforce with top legal organizations for one-year paid positions. This unique experiential learning program gives returning lawyers – many of whom opted out of the workforce for a period of time to raise children – an opportunity to demonstrate their value in the marketplace while increasing their experience, skills, and contacts.

OnRamp launched in 2014 with four trailblazing law firms: Cooley, Baker Botts, Sidley Austin, and Hogan Lovells. Five years later, we’ve partnered with 35 of the world’s top law firms and legal departments — including 3M, Accenture, Amazon, American Express, BMO, Microsoft, Salesforce, and TriNet — due in large part to our valued partnership with the Association of Corporate Counsel Foundation. Together, these legal organizations have posted 200+ Fellowship positions in more than 40 cities highlighted below.
OnRamp Fellowship Candidates: Who They Are

The OnRamp Fellowship is designed for lawyers who are currently unemployed as well as those who are underemployed and working in temporary/contract jobs, or in roles outside of the profession due to the barriers faced when attempting to re-enter after a hiatus.

9.1 years
Average duration of hiatus from practice

- Left to care for children and family: 8%
- Pursued personal projects: 6%
- Relocated for a spouse’s job: 14%
- Left for medical reasons: 71%

Bright Spot & Cultural Studies: How Matches are Made

When hiring lawyers, legal organizations often over-value credentials and pedigree (e.g., law school rankings, grades, clerkships, employment at elite law firms) versus other, more data-driven factors that research shows contribute to high performance. To match candidates to organizations, Diversity Lab works with the participating law firms and legal departments to assess and research the skills, values, and mindsets that the organization’s current high performers embody through a Bright Spot Study (i.e., qualitative 60-minute interviews with dozens of senior high-performers) and an Organizational Cultural Assessment (i.e., an online 15-minute survey that assesses the values of all lawyers in an organization).

Over 500 Bright Spot studies conducted
Over 2,900 Cultural Assessment respondents

Training & Cohorts: What Supports the Fellows’ Success

Each OnRamp Fellow is provided career-development support through:

- Unlimited access to online continuing education through PLI;
- Training by specialists in negotiations, project management, business development, and leadership skills; and
- One-on-one coaching by the most reputable career experts in the legal industry, including Ellen Ostrow, Founder of Lawyers Life Coach, Patricia Hennessy of Hennessy Consulting Group, and Leslie Hom of Naomi Beard & Associates.
OnRamp Fellowship Outcomes: At the Five-Year Mark

- Fellows placed to date: 74
- Fellows who are women of color: 35%
- Fellows who received offers of full-time employment: 87%
- Fellows placed in law firms: 84%
- Fellows placed in-house or in financial institutions: 16%

**Program Outcomes: At the Five-Year Mark**

- **Placement by Practice:**
  - Corporate: 34%
  - Litigation: 23%
  - IP/Tech: 19%
  - Real Estate: 8%
  - Health & Sciences: 8%
  - Labor & Employment: 6%

- **Placement by Region:**
  - East Coast: 57%
  - West Coast: 30%
  - Central US: 13%

**Our law firm and in-house legal department partnerships include:**


**Sponsors:**

3M | Amazon | BMO | Computericon | IBM | Microsoft | Salesforce | TriNet | Accenture | American Express
“It has been helpful to have an external lever to drive change; the Mansfield Rule has helped us move forward at a different velocity. The underlying intent of the Rule actually works, in that it forces people onto the radar screen who would never have been considered before or who would have been only perfunctorily considered.”

Participating AmLaw 100 Law Firm Partner

Inspired by the NFL’s “Rooney Rule,” the Mansfield Rule measures whether law firms have affirmatively considered women lawyers, attorneys of color, and LGBTQ+ attorneys — at least 30% of the candidate pool — for equity partner promotions, lateral positions, and significant leadership and governance roles. The Mansfield Rule is named for Arabella Mansfield, the first woman lawyer admitted to the practice of law in the United States.

**Mansfield Rule Pilot**

More than 40 law firms piloted the inaugural Mansfield Rule. Of those, 41 achieved Certification, and 27 achieved Certification “Plus” status.

**Mansfield Rule “2.0”**

60+ firms are currently participating; the Rule was expanded in 2.0 to include LGBTQ+ lawyers in addition to women and minorities.

**Mansfield Rule “3.0”**

Over 40 additional firms have already requested to sign on for the 3.0 launch in July 2019; a legal department version of the Rule is also in development.

The Mansfield Rule was originally proposed at the 2016 Women in Law Hackathon, hosted by Stanford Law School and sponsored by Bloomberg Law. The Rule has been featured in numerous publications.
Law Firm Progress: Outcomes of the Mansfield Rule Pilot

- 100% of the 41 Certified firms are now tracking their pool of candidates for leadership and governance roles, up from 30% of participating firms prior to the Mansfield Rule. Of the smaller group of firms that did track their previous talent pipelines, 73% increased diversity in the pool of candidates considered for leadership after implementing the Mansfield Rule.

- For senior associate lateral hiring, 100% are tracking their pipelines, up from 28%. Of the firms that did track previously, 57% increased diversity in the pool of candidates considered after implementing the Mansfield Rule.

- For partner lateral hiring, 100% are tracking their pipelines, up from 20%. Of the firms that did track previously, 60% increased diversity in the pool of candidates considered after implementing the Mansfield Rule.

- For equity partner promotions, 100% are tracking their pipelines, up from 60%. Of the firms that did track previously, 67% increased diversity in the pool of candidates considered after implementing the Mansfield Rule.

2018 Mansfield Rule Client Forums

To recognize and reward the 41 firms that achieved Mansfield Rule Certification in 2018, Diversity Lab invited the firms’ newly promoted diverse partners to one of three Client Forums to meet with powerhouse in-house counsel. More than 65 legal departments sent high-level representatives to the two-day Client Forums, including 3M, AIG, BASF, Bloomberg L.P., CBS, Cargill, Dell, Gap Inc., HP Inc., Morgan Stanley, Salesforce, SurveyMonkey, and Walmart.

“My attendance at the Mansfield Rule Client Forum led to further networking that culminated in the biggest business development success of my career, when I helped bring a valuable new client to my law firm.” - Arnold & Porter Mansfield Rule Client Forum attendee

The New York City Bar Association hosted the September Client Forum in New York City.

Gap Inc. hosted the October Client Forum in San Francisco.

3M hosted the November Client Forum at its Innovation Center in the Twin Cities.
OnTrack is a team-oriented, technology-based initiative that supports and tracks the sponsorship of diverse lawyers two-to-three years prior to (OnTrack for Partnership) and two-to-three years after (OnTrack for Leadership) partner promotions. This pilot is designed to provide continuous support to both Protégés and their Sponsorship Teams — keeping everyone “on track” throughout the process. Ten law firms piloted OnTrack in 2018: Arnold & Porter, Baker Botts, Bass Berry & Sims, Cooley, Faegre Baker Daniels, Jenner & Block, Kramer Levin, Miller Canfield, O’Melveny & Myers, and Troutman Sanders. Fifty Sponsorship Teams participated in the program, which ran from March to December, 2018.

OnTrack Fixes for Traditional Sponsorship Program Pitfalls

Starts With a Bang (But…)
Many sponsorship relationships start off strong, with a burst of excitement that eventually wanes.

OnTrack Solution:
Each Sponsorship Team accumulates points throughout the OnTrack Program to keep them motivated and engaged. Rewards, such as networking and relationship building with legal departments, are built into the process to drive progress and goal completion.

Cloudy Goals
Goals of the sponsorship relationship are unclear from the beginning or can get overlooked and glossed over as time passes.

OnTrack Solution:
The OnTrack Technology Platform puts Protégé goals up front so the entire Sponsorship Team knows what to do to support the Protégé’s goals and advocate on his or her behalf for quality work and increased visibility.

The Fizzle
One-on-one sponsorship relationships can fizzle out due to the high demands on lawyers’ time.

OnTrack Solution:
Each OnTrack Protégé has a team of sponsors in varying roles to ensure a high-level of interaction and support, including an internal partner sponsor, management committee member, an external coach, and a legal department sponsor or firm senior partner.

Unconscious Bias
Sponsorship is one of the keys to advancement within a firm, yet research shows that diverse lawyers do not have equal access to these influential power players when compared to their majority counterparts.

OnTrack Solution:
Pair women and minority attorneys — both senior associates and junior partners — with OnTrack Sponsorship Teams to elevate them into leadership within the firm.
CompFirmation — Reducing Unconscious Bias in Pay

CompFirmation is a data-based compensation tool that leverages language optimization and blind review technology to help firms disrupt systemic unconscious bias and ultimately close the law firm pay gap.

In 2017-2018, firms worked with the Diversity Lab team and a computational text analysis expert to analyze partner compensation memos used by management to make compensation decisions. The analysis tested for disparities in the type of language used to describe partners’ performance. Particular attention was focused on language that prior studies have found to vary by demographics such as gender, including: standout or superlative words; grindstone adjectives; doubt-raising or tentative versus assertive language; ability and communication words; use of “we” versus “I” personal pronouns; and positive and negative emotion words.

The goal of the analysis was to better understand if nuances or variances in language and content are correlated to higher or lower compensation and to other demographics such as gender. The findings will be used to guide partners on the unwritten and informal norms that may play a role in success at the firm so everyone – in particular, women and attorneys of color – can maximize their effectiveness when advocating for themselves during the compensation review process.

SMART — Aligning Firm Values with Rewards

Diversity Lab research and other numerous studies show that women lawyers spend more time than their male counterparts on important office “housework,” such as mentoring talent, for which they receive little recognition or institutional credit. Although these activities are critical to the success of law firms, they tend to be undervalued during compensation and promotion decisions when compared to being a rainmaker or participating on governance committees. The SMART (Solutions to Measure, Advance and Reward Talent) initiative, developed during the 2016 Women in Law Hackathon, is a gender neutral reporting and evaluation system that promotes the retention and advancement of women by aligning firm values and culture with compensation and promotions.

In 2017-2018, Diversity Lab launched the SMART initiative with select partner firms. We are in the process of gathering more data around non-billable time and how firms can adopt practices to better track — and ultimately recognize and reward — time spent advancing the firm’s values.
In partnership with Bloomberg Law, Harvard Law School Executive Education, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and UC Hastings College of the Law, Diversity Lab worked with law firms and legal departments from top companies across the country to hack the legal industry’s toughest diversity and inclusion challenges. Two “Shark Tank” style pitch events combined law students, expert advisors, high-level law firm partners, and legal department leaders in small teams who worked together for four months to ideate and pitch solutions that will boost diversity and inclusion in law. The winning ideas will be further developed and piloted by Diversity Lab in partnership with the participating Hackathon organizations.

20 Expert advisors guided the ideation process
107 Law firm partners and legal department leaders participated
19 Law school students joined the teams to ideate and pitch the solutions
Spring Hackathon Pilots in Development

D&I Dash

The D&I Dash aims to revolutionize how the legal industry collects, analyzes, and leverages diversity and inclusion data. With pressure from legal departments, the American Bar Association, and dozens of other groups, law firm leaders feel like they are constantly answering surveys, but not making much progress. The D&I Dash(board) will become a central clearinghouse for diversity data and inclusion best practices, accessible to law firms, in-house legal departments, and law students, tracking real-time intel on retention, promotion, pay, and other talent-related practices.

Huddle

Huddle is a feedback program designed to interrupt unconscious bias in lawyer performance evaluations by facilitating real-time objective feedback and providing concrete career development strategies. Huddle also includes a data analytics feature that helps firms and companies identify their own strengths and weaknesses in the review process, creating a feedback loop for their processes and bolstering their strategies for developing and retaining a diverse pipeline of lawyers.

In.C & Inclusion Imprint

Inclusion Inc. and Inclusion Imprint are two Hackathon ideas designed to produce and measure lasting, inclusive behavioral changes in law firms and legal departments. “In.C,” which stands for “inclusive culture,” aims to create a measurable way to track inclusion at an organizational level. Leveraging the In.C results and identified areas for improvement, “Inclusion Imprint” boosts individual inclusive behaviors by providing resources and knowledge, behavioral change tips, and action items — such as modeling authenticity in the workplace. Both In.C and Inclusion Imprint go beyond the numbers to show how true inclusion unlocks the power of diversity in law firms and legal departments for the benefit of everyone.

Opp Shop

Opp Shop — truly an “Opportunities Shop” — is focused on the principle that lawyers’ long-term success depends on early access to great work and influential people. Opp Shop opens those doors via a blind work assignment process, eliminating unconscious bias in staffing decisions.

NextGen 10 & ClearLead

NextGen 10 and ClearLead, two ideas focused on increasing key leadership and client relationship opportunities for women and lawyers of color, will be piloted in 2019 as part of the next iteration of the Mansfield Rule.
Fall Hackathon Pilots in Development

MicroBoosters

MicroBoosters aims to disrupt unintentional biases that impact under-represented lawyers throughout their careers. By supplementing existing unconscious bias training, MicroBoosters fill the gap between training and action by delivering short “bias-busting” reminders immediately prior to critical decision-making moments, such as reviewing resumes, interviewing candidates, or delivering feedback to a junior lawyer. MicroBoosts will take multiple forms and be delivered on a regular schedule via computer pop-ups and other methods to keep the issues top-of-mind.

LoopedIn

LoopedIn aims to provide equal access to influential people, events, and opportunities in law firms and legal departments through an online, real-time platform. The platform contains portals for a “Coffee Calendar” to increase informal meetings with leadership, a “Networking Nexus” to provide opportunities to attend career-enhancing internal and external events, and a posting board for pro bono work and philanthropic activities. Opportunities for work and activities will be transparent and accessible to all, rather than doled out via informal “in-group” networks and back-channels. The platform will also help lawyers with flexible work arrangements connect to opportunities at their fingertips, whether or not they are in the office.

Inclusion Rider

The Inclusion Rider — inspired by the Hollywood concept popularized at the 2018 Oscars — will be used as a standard addendum to corporate legal department requests for proposal (RFPs) to law firms. This will serve as a consistent approach for legal departments in evaluating firms’ D&I outcomes to promote better decision-making in outside counsel selections at the outset of the bidding process for new and expanded work.

Pay Equity Pledge

To better understand the legal profession’s pay equity issues, the Pay Equity Pledge Project incorporates three steps: 1) the collection of anonymized compensation data, where participating law firms and legal departments will receive access to tools and guidance to provide data for confidential analysis on an industry-wide basis; 2) a sophisticated regression analysis of the anonymized data by a PhD-level data scientist, taking into account inputs such as gender, race, ethnicity, seniority, and performance metrics; and 3) educational opportunities for law firms and legal departments to help eliminate the pay equity gap and the underlying issues that cause it.

The Sponsorship Key

To be integrated into OnTrack in 2019, The Sponsorship Key focuses on the matching of protégés and sponsors, revamped accountability and success metrics, and rewards for successful participants.
ChIPs Inclusion Blueprint Survey

Diversity Lab partnered with ChIPs, a nonprofit organization focused on advancing and connecting women in technology, law, and policy, to design and launch a ground-breaking Inclusion Blueprint Survey that measures gender diversity in law firm leadership as well as the work experiences of women at the practice group level, with a particular focus on IP.

In contrast to traditional surveys that only measure diversity “headcount,” this survey aims to encourage and support inclusion efforts by honoring law firms that have fair and transparent advancement and compensation processes that contribute to a higher representation of women in leadership. It also honors firms that make a concerted effort to track and measure equitable access to work experiences and opportunities to ensure there is a diverse associate pipeline on-track for equity partnership in the IP group.

Some of the survey questions included:

- “Does the firm track and analyze non-billable activities (often called firm hours or office housework) for all partners to ensure there is an equal distribution of non-billable work across genders?”
- “Has the firm conducted a pay equity analysis in the last five years and worked to make meaningful changes to remedy any issues and keep them from reoccurring?”
- “Does the IP group track and monitor work experiences (e.g., taking depositions, expert cross, drafting licenses) for IP associates to ensure that assignments and experiences are being provided equitably to men and women?”
- “Does the IP group track and monitor origination credit given to partners for expanding current work and bringing in new business to ensure a fair and transparent process and end-result across genders?”

Nearly 60 firms were invited to participate in the pilot version of the survey. Because the survey had a very high response rate of 60%, ChIPs and Diversity Lab were able to measure firms’ inclusion activities and report back to each firm on how its results compared to the larger group’s, providing encouragement to improve and enhance their efforts going forward. Next year, more firms will be invited to participate and the survey also will measure inclusion activities in other practice areas.
Silicon Valley Urban Debate League

The Silicon Valley Urban Debate League (SVUDL) channels the power of voice to engage at-risk youth in rigorous, evidence-based argument and competition. In schools where college-going rates dip below 40%, more than 95% of urban debaters graduate high school and over 90% of graduates go on to college. Over half (54%) plan to pursue careers in law. Diversity Lab donated both time and money to assist SVUDL in adding more schools and coaches to their already amazingly successful efforts to increase the pipeline of diverse students who pursue college and then law school.

Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession

The Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession is driving real progress through comprehensive outreach and original programming to replace barriers with bridges between legal, judicial, professional, educational, and governmental institutions. Their phenomenal Chief Executive Officer, Sandra Yamate, participated as an advisor to one of Diversity Lab’s 2016 Women in Law Hackathon teams. Because of her and her team’s hard work, they won one of the top prizes and her organization was awarded a donation of $5,000 to support their needle moving efforts.

Association of Corporate Counsel Foundation & UN Women

The ACC Foundation supports the efforts of the Association of Corporate Counsel, serving the needs of the in-house bar through the dissemination of research and surveys, leadership and professional development opportunities, and support of diversity and pro bono initiatives. For the third consecutive year, Diversity Lab and the ACC Foundation have partnered on OnRamp In-House, a version of the OnRamp Fellowship focused on bringing women who took extended hiatuses from the workforce back into corporate legal departments. As part of that effort, to celebrate women leaders in law and the participating legal departments — including Amazon, Salesforce, BMO, American Express, Microsoft, 3M, and Accenture — the ACC Foundation hosts a Global Women in Law & Leadership Symposium and Dinner at the United Nations in New York. UN Women, the premier international organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women, partners on this effort because of its global outlook and thought leadership.
The Center for Women in Law is one of the leading educational institutions devoted to the success of the entire spectrum of women in law, from first-year law students to the most experienced and accomplished attorneys. It combines theory with practice, identifying and addressing the persistent issues facing individual women and the profession as a whole. As one of its research efforts, The Center for Women in Law is joining forces with The NALP Foundation to examine the experiences of women of color in law school. This study is critical because nearly 50% of law firm offices have no partners who are women of color. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the lack of women of color partners may stem in part from disparate experiences while in law school. Diversity Lab has donated to this effort to better understand what barriers exist for law students of color and how to remove them.

Legal Momentum

Legal Momentum’s mission is to ensure economic and personal security for all women and girls by advancing equity in education, the workplace, and the courts. Every year, they honor several outstanding women and men who contribute to this mission. Diversity Lab has partnered with them for several years, and donated to their efforts this year in support of the 2019 Women of Achievement Honorees, including Julie Gruber, Executive Vice President, Global General Counsel, Corporate Secretary & Chief Compliance Officer of Gap Inc., Jan Kang, General Counsel of Chronicle, and Cassandra Knight, Vice President & Chief Litigation Counsel of PayPal.
The Diversity Lab Team

Amber Boydstun
Computational Modeling & Chief Data Scientist

Leila Hock
Senior Manager, Innovation & Training

Lisa Kirby
Chief Intelligence & Knowledge Sharing Officer

Kate Johnston Ryan
Director, Design & Innovation

Marc Kornegay
Marketing & Events Strategist

Karen Masciulli
Director of Talent & Coaching, OnRamp Fellowship

Natalia Marulanda
Mansfield Rule Specialist

Ellen Ostrow
OnRamp Fellowship & OnTrack Coach; Founder, Lawyers Life Coach

Anand Sokhey
Data Scientist

Caren Ulrich Stacy
Founder & CEO

Toni Wells
OnTrack Coach; Owner, Bespoke Marketing Partners LLC

Jennifer Winslow
Chief Operating Officer, Diversity Lab Managing Director, OnRamp Fellowship

Follow us on Twitter!
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@OnRampFellow