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Shark Tank-Style Pitch Competition Delivers Innovative Ways to Defend and Fortify DEI in the Legal Profession

SAN FRANCISCO (July 31, 2024) — Following five months of working together in structured teams, 100+ legal department leaders, law firm partners, and DEI experts pitched their innovative solutions at Diversity Lab's 2024 "Movements to Movements Hackathon" to a dozen influential judges and 200+ spectators.

The teams' solutions were focused on two challenges:

> **Community**: How can we defend and fortify DEI across the profession and in each organization to withstand downturns, leadership changes, anti-DEI rhetoric, and other headwinds?

> **Inclusive Talent Systems:** How can we improve workplace practices and processes to ensure fair and equal access to high-quality work, sponsors, and business/clients to level the playing field for all talent, including historically underrepresented lawyers?

The solutions ranged from apps that empower individuals to take ownership and action for advancing inclusivity in law to tools for ensuring equitable distribution of high-visibility, quality work for career advancement. The solutions also included refreshed approaches for sponsorship opportunities that deepen business connections between in-house lawyers and their outside counsel firms.

While the pitches focused on actionable and impactful business solutions, they were also incredibly lively and passionate. There was walk-on music, skits, coordinating t-shirts, outfits, bedazzled shoes, thoughtfully designed logos, professionally crafted visuals, and more. (Mark Cuban, the infamous Shark Tank judge, would have been so proud! A photo gallery of the event can be found here.)

After *much* deliberation, the judges selected three top pitches with several honorable mentions. One pitch was also selected as the "crowd favorite" by the packed audience.

The scoring was focused on three key criteria: 1) impact potential, to ensure the solutions are scalable and have a long-term positive impact; 2) feasibility, ease of adoption and potential for buy-in from stakeholders; and 3) measurability, how progress will be tracked and measured for impact.

The four winning solutions — as well as aspects from the remaining six pitches — will be further developed by Diversity Lab in 2024 and piloted with the hackers' organizations in 2025.

"Our past Hackathons in 2016 and 2018 generated industry-changing ideas, such as the Mansfield Rule and the Diversity Dividends Collective, that are now successful movements years later. Instead of a typical conference where industry leaders rehash the profession's inclusivity challenges over and over again – which often feels like Groundhog Day – the Hackathon provides a forum for actionable solutions. One hundred of

the smartest leaders in law come together, craft ideas to tackle these challenges leveraging design thinking, and then work with Diversity Lab to put their ideas into action," said Caren Ulrich Stacy, Diversity Lab CEO.

In addition to the winning ideas, Kaitlyn Stone from Barnes & Thornburg and Pablo Castro from Cisco were honored by their fellow hackers as MVPs, recognizing their commitment and enthusiasm throughout the five-month Hackathon ideation and pitch process.

Below is an overview of the Hackathon teams and solutions, including the winners and honorable mentions. The list of judges, teams, slides with details on each idea, and photos from the pitch event can be found here.

Top Winners

Judges' Selection: Guardians of the DEI Universe
Solution: BUILD

To fortify DEI efforts across the legal profession and make them accessible to all, the BUILD Certification focuses on ways individuals can contribute to an inclusive legal profession, where everyone has a fair shot at success. BUILD is a "bottom up" approach that places DEI efforts literally in the hands of individuals through a personalized app that provides actionable resources and steps that individuals can take to continue building more inclusive and equitable workplaces. As individuals progress, the app tracks and rewards their actions with concrete networking and partnership opportunities. The BUILD solution recognizes that everyone has varying reasons for choosing to engage in DEI efforts, but the power to BUILD a legal profession that values DEI rests ultimately with each of us individually.

Team Members: Amanda Rosania, American Express; Pablo Castro, Cisco; Tom Chen, Haynes and Boone; Judy Mercier, Holland & Knight; Jeremy Creelan, Jenner & Block; Stephanie Niehaus, Peloton; Ena Lebel, Pittsburgh Legal Diversity & Inclusion Coalition; James A. Keller, Saul Ewing

DEI Advisor: Yoonhwi Cho, K&L Gates

Judges' Selection: Control + Alt + Interrupt
Solution: Leadership Escalator 10.0 (LEX)

LEX is a two-part approach to equitably distribute career-making opportunities and bringing the junior lawyers' voice to the work allocation process and outcomes. LEX tracks high-visibility work to ensure lawyers are getting the quality and quantity of work needed to grow and advance. It also includes a Net Promoter Score (NPS) pulse check to evaluate lawyer satisfaction with the quality of work they've received. It aims to solve one of the most important make-or-break aspects of a lawyer's career – access to high quality work.

Team Members: Ashley James Smith, Amtrak; Maureen O'Neill, Consilio; Andrew Barkan, Fried Frank; Rebecca Lindahl, Katten; Brandon Mita, Littler; Scott A. Wells, Tradeweb; Nicole McCluney, Wolfspeed

DEI Advisor: Monya Bunch, WilmerHale
Team Facilitator: Kelly McLain, Cargill

Judges' Selection: Bias Busters
Solution: Inclusion Hub

The Inclusion Hub is a tool that addresses the issue of fair work allocation by making it easier for firms to build inclusive and diverse teams. The Hub provides an interactive platform that provides searchable information about associates' core competencies and desired work experience. Lawyers assigning work can use the Hub to identify associates to staff on client matters, explore through low-risk and get-to-know-you projects, and schedule a preliminary meet-and-greet. The Inclusion Hub also generates metrics for annual reports and scorecards for clients to evaluate their law firms' efforts to improve fair work allocation and utilization of diverse teams.

Team Members: Kate Currie, American Express; Letoyia Horton, Beazley; Laura Baucus, Dykema; Melissa Zujkowski, Flex; Kathleen Molamphy, ICL; Sophie Zerbib, Intel; Hope Abramov, Thompson Coburn; Josh Stern, WilmerHale; Martinique Aguero, Zendesk

DEI Advisor: Marlon Lutfiyya, Neal Gerber
Team Facilitator: Miko Brown, Project Ganesha

Crowd Favorite Selection: Seal Team 7
Solution: SEALPro

SEALPro (Seeking Equitable Assignments for Lawyers) allows assigning lawyers to know in real-time which lawyers are available for work and which lawyers are seeking more professional development opportunities. It also allows clients to see who is staffed on their projects, to track firm and lawyer demographics, and to provide feedback directly to high-performing attorneys. SEALPro will enable lawyers from traditionally underrepresented groups to have equal opportunities for assignments and provide clients a window into and more involvement in staffing their projects. Through its data collection capabilities, administrators can track the professional development of individual lawyers (i.e., what experiences each lawyer needs for their class level advancement) and assign lawyers by seeing their current and available teams through a more broad and inclusive lens.

Team Members: Evan Parness, Covington; Shannon McNeal, Davis Wright Tremaine; Danielle DeVito-Hurley, Gunster; Nichole Valeyko, Merck; Ashlei Ferguson, Microsoft; Jay Williams, Orrick; Michelle D. Nickel, Toyota Motor Credit Corporation; Amie Siebert, Zip Co US

DEI Advisor: Rosa Nuñez, Foley Hoag
Team Facilitator: Christina Graham, PNC

Honorable Mentions

Team: Team Cowboy Carter
Solution: The Table

The Table aims to facilitate education and create a community focused on DEI issues and strategies. The Table will: (1) leverage AI to host listening sessions and track outcomes; (2) generate an annual state of the industry report to identify challenges and analyze progress; (3) utilize an ever-growing resource library that reflects its community knowledge-sharing; and (4) convene members annually to discuss the state of DEI, the successes and challenges the community is facing, and the actions required to maintain a collective commitment to

creating an inclusive, equitable, and diverse legal profession. At The Table, the primary focus is to create and protect a safe space to continually foster a community focus on DEI-related issues and strategies, complete with data-driven metrics to analyze industry-wide challenges, and measure the success of strategies implemented in response to those challenges over time.

Team Members: Robert Moore, Baker McKenzie; Kaitlyn Stone, Barnes & Thornburg; Caitlin Mattler, Beazley; Brandy Smith, Lincoln Financial Group; Scholastica Baker, McDonald's Corporation; Sonya Rosenberg, Neal Gerber; Naana Danquah Jefferson, SLB (Schlumberger)

DEI Advisor: Chad Cole, Jackson Walker
Team Facilitator: Deanna Kwong, HPE

Team: Equity League
Solution: The Legal Equity League

The Legal Equity League empowers individuals to deepen their commitment to DEI and recognizes them for their actions. The multi-level certification program is categorized into three levels: Bronze (DEI Explorer & Ally), Silver (DEI Leader), and Gold (DEI Architect). Each level has specific criteria that individuals must take action on – such as completing approved DEI training and demonstrating leadership in DEI initiatives – to achieve recognition and move on to the next level. The Legal Equity League offers customizations at each certification level, making the program widely accessible to legal professionals' needs and goals. Over time, the League will consist of a network of qualified DEI heroes spanning law firms, legal departments, government agencies, and academic institutions.

Team Members: Jason Halpern, American Express; Helena Almeida, Automatic Data Processing Inc. (ADP); Kati Bynon, Beazley; Darshak Dholakia, Dechert; Peter Lam, Extreme Networks; Maya Gandhi, The New York Times; Erin O'Neil Ashby, PGIM Real Estate; Samuel Schwartz-Fenwick, Seyfarth; Ashante Smith, Troutman Pepper

DEI Advisor: Whitney Smallwood, Fish & Richardson
Team Facilitator: Tienne Anderson, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Team: Inclusion Superstars
Solution: Inclusion Superstars

Inclusion Superstars is a credential program that leverages gamification to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst legal professionals. The platform awards lawyers points for engaging in inclusion-related activities that generate career-advancing professional opportunities for junior lawyers, with a specific focus on equal access for lawyers who are historically underrepresented in law. The points are verified by employers and certified by Diversity Lab, which designates the criteria for the Inclusion Superstar credential. Organizations can also achieve recognition through a tiered status system that is connected to the participation of their lawyers and professional staff. Individuals and organizations that achieve the Inclusion Superstar credential will benefit from increased DEI engagement, competitive edge, and marketing advantages.

Team Members: Rita Tendolkar, American Express; Jennifer Stancil, Beazley; Beth Bernstein Connors, Blank Rome; Joeann Walker, Con Edison; Roger Denning, Fish & Richardson; Angela Machala, Winston & Strawn

DEI Advisor: Sherrie Farrell, Dykema
Team Facilitator: Cory Myers, KPMG

Team: Team Up
Solution: Mansfield Match

Mansfield Match is a digital sourcing platform designed to connect in-house counsel with law firm lawyers for potential legal services engagements and to expand professional networks. The Match platform allows law firm lawyers to profile their skills, background, commitment to DEI, and post videos to highlight their unique attributes. It also allows for endorsements and testimonials so in-house counsel can search by law firm lawyers who have the skills and background they need for their work.

Team Members: Andrew Lolli, Armstrong Teasdale; Kalisha Chorba, Jacobs; April Boyer, K&L Gates; Karen Brown, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center; Kristen Coleman, Segal McCambridge; Daniel Attaway, Womble Bond Dickinson

DEI Advisor: Satra Sampson-Arokium, Dechert
Team Facilitator: Sang Kim, Accenture

Team: 4-All
Solution: 4-All

4-All is a team-focused, four-person dynamic sponsorship and career accelerator consisting of both in-house and law firm attorneys. Together, they explore legal practice challenges, advance career trajectory and business development opportunities, and embark on succession planning. The 4-All program aims to align client and law firm values, build intentional connections, and increase networking opportunities.

Team Members: Melissa Cabral, Epiq; Rose Kenerson, Euclid Transactional; Jennifer Windom, Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel; Kristin Lee, Morgan Lewis; Vincent Cesare, Nixon Peabody; Sarah Markenson-Bussel, U.S. Bank

DEI Advisor: Norma Jackson, Thompson Coburn
Team Facilitator: Sharad Khemani, Stryker

Team: Career Catalyst
Solution: Career Catalyst

The Career Catalyst Program bridges the gap between mentorship and sponsorship programs by pairing high-potential, mid-level lawyers with experienced in-house counsel leaders. The program provides structured support, advocacy, and exposure to senior leaders, empowering mid-level lawyers to navigate complex career paths and reach their full potential.

Team Members: Jenny Lane, Airbnb; Barbie Reinard, Amazon; Jenna Bedsole, AutoZone, Inc.; Sebastian Meis, Baker Donelson; James Edwell, Consilio; Joseph Jean, Pillsbury; Amy Melican, Tapestry; Jennifer Goodwin, Victaulic Company; Caroline Miller Smith, White & Case

DEI Advisor: Sylvia James, Winston & Strawn
Team Facilitator: Gianni Dimos, American Express

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About Diversity Lab: We envision a world where the leaders are as diverse as the workforces and communities they represent. For more details, visit www.diversitylab.com.

Our Work: Diversity Lab designs, tests, and measures the outcomes of science-based and data-driven talent practices that allow for fair and equal access to advancement opportunities.

Our Focus: Our primary focus is on leaders in law since they often rise to positions of influence in government, boardrooms, courtrooms, and beyond. The more diverse our leadership, the more inclusive and equitable the decisions for the benefit of the entire workforce and society.

Our Impact: Inclusion is the goal, greater diversity — in leadership and beyond — is the result.