

Cablefax Daily™

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What the Industry Reads First

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Words & Actions: Creating Healthy Employee Resource Groups

D&I leaders from across the cable ecosystem came together Tuesday for a joint **WICT/NAMIC** panel on best practices for building and fortifying employee resource groups.

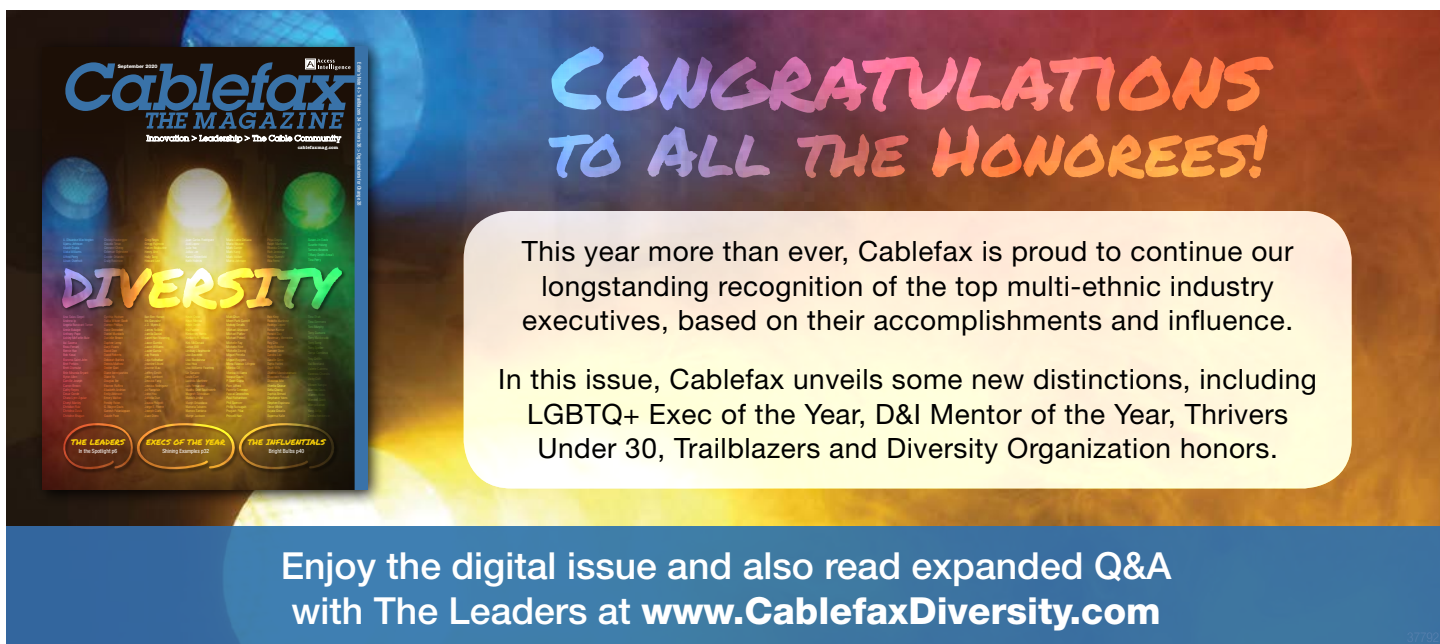
For all of the panelists, ERGs have become a way to build and maintain a stronger company culture. **Altice USA** introduced its ERGs, which it calls affinity groups, in 2018 in an attempt to better merge the cultures of **Suddenlink** and **Cablevision** and drive diversity and inclusion.

“It was born of the idea that having difference and diversity in the organization drives innovation,” Altice USA chief diversity officer/evp, government and community affairs *Lee Schroeder* said. “The way that we measure our success is by how much employees recognize and engage with the affinity groups, whether or not they’re actually formal members, because for us this is about cultural change, overall.”

Each of the company’s on the panel has also introduced an allyship component to their ERGs, allowing folks who may not traditionally belong in an ERG to be supportive and get involved. “Our theme at **Comcast NBCUniversal** for all the ERGs is you don’t have to be to belong. You don’t necessarily have to personally identify with the ERG. You might want to join an ERG just to learn more about that community,” Comcast NBCU executive director, diversity and inclusion *Mini Timmaraju* said. “Our founder, *Ralph Roberts*, was a big fan and a frequent attendee of the Young Professionals Network events and he was well into his 90s when we formed ERGs.”

ERGs can occasionally be viewed as holding too many purely social events, but the panelists said that view is reflective of executives not recognizing the value of social connection. “I hope there are some social aspects happening,” Schroeder said. “Every one of our companies are hard-driving companies filled with people who are committed professionals who give of themselves to our organizations every day. I think part of the way in which we get the most value out of each of our employees is by seeing them as whole people, not just the people who they come in the door as for their jobs.”

The panelists agreed that the social unrest that came following the death of *George Floyd* changed the conversations around what diversity and inclusion really means at their companies. “What diversity and inclusion stood for



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This year more than ever, Cablefax is proud to continue our longstanding recognition of the top multi-ethnic industry executives, based on their accomplishments and influence.

In this issue, Cablefax unveils some new distinctions, including LGBTQ+ Exec of the Year, D&I Mentor of the Year, Thrivers Under 30, Trailblazers and Diversity Organization honors.

Enjoy the digital issue and also read expanded Q&A with The Leaders at www.CablefaxDiversity.com

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prior to those events, even in their best manifestation, was different and changed afterward,” **AMC Networks** chief transformation and people officer *Jennifer Caserta* said.

AMC Networks has now begun calling the function DEI for “diversity, equity and inclusion.” The importance of highlighting equity came after listening sessions with employees. “It is about having practices that are equitable for your people and your employees so that they feel like advantage is as level as it should and could be within an organization,” Caserta said. “It really was through the conversations that were being had in a different way and the way in which social and corporate came together unlike it ever had before.”

Timmaraju agreed that while conversations around racial inequities had happened in the past, something felt different this time. “It hit differently because it was so powerful to see how many of our white colleagues were paying attention and rising up, marching in the streets, raising this issue,” Timmaraju said. “To be candid, the Black employees have been on the forefront of these issues this entire time.”

Timmaraju said many of Comcast’s Black employees are still angry and are skeptical that individuals and companies will make the changes necessary for more racial equality. “Our CEO made a \$100mln, over the course of three years, commitment to social justice and racial equity,” Timmaraju said. “Our employees are going to hold us accountable to that.”

Fox News, ESPN on Top: News and sports were the big ratings winners last week, with the first presidential debate and coverage of *Trump’s* COVID-19 diagnosis helping **Fox News** hang on to the No 1 spot in the weekly primetime race among ad-supported cable nets. Fox News was the most-watched, averaging 5.349mln total viewers for the week, followed by **ESPN** (4.074mln). **CNN** and **MSNBC** were neck-and-neck, with CNN averaging 2.887mln and MSNBC 2.881mln. Rounding out the week’s top six nets in prime are two **Discovery, Inc** siblings—**HGTV** (1.161mn) and **TLC** (1.056mln). FYI, TLC ranks No 1 in prime with W25-54/18-49/18-34 for 3Q and year-to-date. One interesting note is that 25-54s are generally considered the prime news demo. But it was actually ESPN that edged out the newscasters in the demo this past week, with 1.764mln in prime and 533K in total day vs Fox News’ 1.169mln in prime and 458K in total day. In other ratings news, **Hallmark Channel’s** premiere of original movie “Country at Heart” Saturday was the highest-rated and most-watched entertainment cable program of the day, averaging 2.2mln total viewers/305K women 25-54. Hallmark finished the week in the #7 spot in prime, averaging 949K total viewers.

SCTE-ISBE Introduces Improved LMS: **SCTE-ISBE** launched a new learning management system Tuesday. Built to provide continuous training to professionals at all levels, the new LMS puts a greater focus on content, provides

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- David Atman, President, Lindsay Broadband

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better data reporting and a more user-friendly interface. “SCTE-ISBE is always making incremental improvements to its learning management system, but we began the process of moving to a new system last year,” SCTE-ISBE vp, membership & learning operations *Robin Fenton* told **CFX**. “The improved LMS offers a wide variety of more user-friendly features, such as faster processing speeds, streamlined course navigation, the ability to print transcripts and gamification-style leaderboards.” For more on the LMS and SCTE-ISBE’s learning and development initiatives, check out our extended [interview](#) with Fenton.

Spectrum News Heads to Big D: Charter-owned **Spectrum News** is expanding in the Lone Star State, with Spectrum News 1 launching to customers across Dallas-Fort Worth/Wichita Falls and the Southern and Western regions of Texas on Oct 16. Spectrum News already provides coverage of Austin and San Antonio. Spectrum News 1 is available exclusively to Charter customers.

Charter Appeals E-rate Decision: Charter wants the **FCC** to review a decision by the Universal Service Administrative Company to rescind and recover funding paid under the E-rate program for services provided the Granville County (NC) Public School District in 2007-08. USAC rescinded more than \$350K in funding commitments and seeks to recover more than \$310K in E-rate funding to Charter, based on alleged violations of the competitive bidding rule. **Time Warner Cable**, which Charter acquired in 2015, was the provider at the time in question. “USAC undertook inexplicable efforts to claw back vital funding nearly a decade after (1) a \$43 meal and several event tickets were provided to junior Granville employees who did not have decision-making authority, and (2) USAC completed an investigation that did not find any violations with respect to the 2007 and 2008 Funding Years based on such gifts,” Charter wrote in an FCC filing this week. USAC issued its rescinding decision in November 2018, with Charter requesting a review by the USAC in January 2019. The USAC denied Charter’s appeal on Aug 6, 2020.

Ampersand Debuts Self-Serve TV Ads: Self-serve interfaces are pretty standard in the digital world, but relatively new in the TV buying world. **Ampersand**, the ad sales jv between **Comcast**, **Charter** and **Cox**, announced a beta version of its AND platform, the multiscreen TV planning, buying and measurement platform launched at the beginning of 2020 that allows TV buys to operate like digital buys. Now, local TV advertisers can define target audiences by leveraging their own first party data or choosing from thousands of audience segments built with third-party data, together with set-top box office data at a DMA level. The beta is expected to run through the end of 2020 with general availability in Q1 of 2021. “I think if we’re honest with each other the TV ecosystem has been somewhat complacent over the years with digital rivals,” said Ampersand pres *Andrew Ward*, speaking during a panel at **Advertising Week**. “We also think the ability to target in a multi-stream environment, the notion of TV being a single linear experience is in the midst of evolution.”

NBCU, Twitter Go for the Gold: **Twitter** and **NBCU** extended their 2019 content partnership to include the postponed Tokyo Olympics (summer 2021) and the Winter Beijing Games (February 2022). Elements include daily, original programming on Twitter live from the host city, a daily poll that will allow fans on Twitter to choose one live look-in to NBC’s Primetime or Primetime Plus broadcasts each night, and real-time video highlights throughout each competition day. As with the original agreement, NBC Olympics will lead the sales process, with Twitter providing sales resources.

Distribution: **Weigel Broadcasting Co’s Heroes & Icons** (H&I) and **Start TV** are now available on **DISH**. H&I (channel 293) features all five original, live-action “Star Trek” series plus dramas such as “Nash Bridges” and “J.A.G.” Start TV (291) features strong female characters in a lineup of dramas that includes “Closer” and “The Good Wife.” Weigel also operates multicast network **MeTV**.

#DIW2020: It’s Digital Inclusion Week, an event sponsored by the **National Digital Inclusion Alliance** that’s aimed at raising awareness of solutions addressing home internet access, personal devices, and local technology training and support programs. There’s a ton of happenings, including **Charter** teaming with **EveryoneOn** to give away laptops to support distance learning. “We need to make it a national policy that we reach 100% of our population with broadband no matter who you are or where you live. #DIW2020 #digitalequityNOW,” **FCC** commish *Jessica Rosenworcel* tweeted.

On the Circuit: OK, regulatory junkies. Time to set your 2021 calendar. The **FCC** has added the [dates](#) for next year’s Open Commission Meeting to its events page. The party gets started Jan 13, a week before Inauguration Day.

People: *Jennifer Yohe*, a former **Comcast** svp, has joined media technology and services company **MediaKind** as evp, business affairs. She most recently was pres/chief business officer of Xtreme Concepts Racing, which made its NASCAR racing debut in March 2019. -- **Lindsay Broadband** added *Kevin Sweeting* as product line manager, GPON/XGS-PON solutions. Sweeting brings over 20 years of wireless and wireline telecom experience to the role. He comes to Lindsay from **Airspan Networks**, where he served as vp, sales for Canada.