

Using tech to make matches

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FULL TEXT

Shaniqua Davis founded Noirefy, a "diversity advancement" website and database that connects professionals of color with high-growth companies, in 2017. Today, her Chicago-based company is busier than ever.

Davis says Noirefy now also provides "insights to our candidates about life and culture at these organizations." Those insights include testimonials from other diverse candidates who've worked at the firms.

Davis, a single mother of a 12-year-old daughter, said her quest for diversity, especially when it comes to the C-suite, would be complete once "companies see diversity not as a project or a quota but as a normal part of hiring."

CRAIN'S: What is the corporate culture as you see it when it comes to diversifying the C-suite?

DAVIS: The culture is still the same, at least from a leadership standpoint. It's a culture of traditional white males. People usually hire people who have a similar background as them, which is why the workforce looks like it does today. Small and midsize companies are the fastest growing across the board when it comes to diversity, while Fortune 500 companies have a way to go. Large corporations are good at diversifying lower and middle management but fall short when it comes to the board room or C-suite.

Why do you think a company like yours is needed today?

Last year was an interesting year, and I think companies were literally forced to make changes. So aside from diversifying their employment ranks, companies now recognize the need to create a better work atmosphere that appeals to minorities, more specifically Black and Latinx. That's where a company like Noirefy can be helpful.

What are some barriers for minorities getting hired at Fortune 500 companies?

Lack of access and lack of networking opportunities. To remove this barrier there needs to be more mentorship from the C-suite down to midlevel management.

Should diversity go both ways? Should Black-owned companies also work toward diversifying their workforces?

I think Black-owned businesses can choose to do that if they want to. I think it's a great idea for Black-owned businesses to build up a Black workforce because once we do that, we are creating more equity in the workplace. There are more advancement opportunities for Blacks at a Black-owned business, and that is where they can get the experience needed to move into a higher position at a bigger company.

What's your definition of the word minority?

Our definition of minority is Black and Latinx professionals, but society says a minority is women, Blacks, Latino, Asians, and so on. That's why I don't use the words "people of color" anymore because traditionally people of color were Blacks. And now people of color include any other non-majority race.

When will corporate America more closely represent the population?

That won't happen anytime too soon. Diversity should be something natural and not a quota that needs to be met.

DETAILS

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