

## Sylvia James Weighs In: Can C-Suite Diversity Officers Really Make a Difference?

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Winston & Strawn Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer Sylvia James was recently interviewed in an ABA Journal article titled “Can C-suite diversity officers really make a difference?” In the piece, Sylvia discusses firms’ push to appoint chief diversity officers (CDO) and the broader implications of this growing trend.

“I think it sends a message both internally and externally about the importance that the firm places on the position. It adds a certain amount of weight and gravitas. So I do think that the title matters,” she said.

Sylvia also touched on why she’s so passionate about the role, and why women of color are more inclined to seek out the position of CDO. “There’s something about having gone through the experience of being a minority woman or a Black woman in a large law firm, of people thinking, ‘I made it through this process, I have something to give back, and I’m passionate about it,’” she explained.

One of the ways Sylvia has successfully given back during her tenure as chief diversity and inclusion officer is by launching Winston’s Diversity and Inclusion Associate Sponsorship Program which pairs every member of the executive committee for one year with a fifth- or sixth-year associate who falls into a diverse category (women, LGBTQ+, or of a racial or ethnic minority).

“I cannot overemphasize what it means to have leadership involvement in the diversity committee. In our firm, we’re divided into litigation department and transactions, and everything else falls into one of those two. It really helps to have the heads of those departments involved on the diversity committee, instead of us coming up with things and then someone going to the leaders and trying to get buy-in,” Sylvia said.

To read the full article, [click here](#).

To learn more about Winston & Strawn’s Diversity & Inclusion initiatives, [click here](#).

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Sylvia James