TITLE: Is That a Unicorn I See? – A Conversation with LGBTQ Asian American Partners

SUBJECT MATTER: LGBTQ; Career Development

DESCRIPTION: Interested in hearing about the challenges of being a minority in the practice? In recent years, many law firms have put diversity and inclusion on the top of their agenda. And, although it is relatively rare to see an APA attorney make partner or even an out LGBT attorney make partner. So, what about LGBTQ Asian American law firm partners? Read: UNICORNS. For the first time in history, we sit down with some of the handful of out LGBTQ Asian American law firm partners in America to discuss their career paths and the impact their identities and intersectionalities have played in the journey towards partnership. Engaging in an open and frank conversation, the speakers will provide their thoughts on visibility, mentorship and role models, diversity programs, law firm recruitment and their role and responsibilities as partners (including business generation). We hope the experiences and lessons shared by the speakers prove valuable to *any* attorney or law student, as they touch on universal issues such as overcoming career challenges, tackling fear and vulnerability, finding common ground with those of different backgrounds and being a “first” within an organization, all from the unique perspective of our LGBTQ Asian American partners.

MODERATOR: Hon. Sabrina S. McKenna, Associate Justice, Hawaii Supreme Court

SPEAKERS:
David Tsai, Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP
Connie Montoya, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP
Jacob Y. Chen, Dai & Associates, PC
Trung D. Tu, Tyson & Mendes


4. “Fish & Richardson’s DJ Healey on Practicing Law as a Transgender Trailblazer”. Texas Lawyer. February 2, 2018. ([https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/sites/texaslawyer/2018/02/02/practicing-law-as-transgender-trailblazer/?srreturn=20180617111409](https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/sites/texaslawyer/2018/02/02/practicing-law-as-transgender-trailblazer/?srreturn=20180617111409)). A profile of a transgender law firm partner’s experience ascending to partnership and interactions with other attorneys and clients. We can draw on these experiences in an attempt to understand challenges faced by transgender Asian American attorneys.


7. “Law Firm Data Suggests Continuing Challenges for LGBT Lawyers”. American Bar Association. March 20, 2017. ([https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/litigation/materials/2017_LGBT_Forum/Written%20Materials/1_law_firm_data_suggests_continuing_challenges_for_lgbt_lawyers.authcheckdam.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/litigation/materials/2017_LGBT_Forum/Written%20Materials/1_law_firm_data_suggests_continuing_challenges_for_lgbt_lawyers.authcheckdam.pdf)). Drawing from data from two recently published studies that reveal how attorneys are less likely to identify as LGBT than adults in the general public, this article discusses
these findings and suggests a few reasons why diversity efforts have not yet yielded full inclusion of the LGBT community.


Other articles of interest:

1. In July 2011, the Center for Talent Innovation (“CTI”), a nonprofit think tank based in New York City, issued a blistering report, reaffirming the continued validity of the bamboo ceiling. Although Asian Americans account for “15 to 25 percent of Ivy League enrollment, 24 percent at Stanford and a stunning 46 percent at UC”, they make up “fewer than 2 percent of Fortune 500 CEOs and corporate officers.” Furthermore, “in spite of their ambition, Asian men are more likely to feel stalled in their careers than men in any other group: 63 percent feel stalled versus 46 percent of African-Americans, 51 percent of Hispanics and 48 percent of Caucasians.” The report noted a host of “tripwires on the way to the top” including lack of mentorship, requirement to conform to “prevailing leadership models” and a feeling of being out of place. See http://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/CWLP_Asians-in-America-KeyFindings-CTI.pdf.

2. Similarly, in a 2013 National Aggregate Report by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, 0.9% of Asians in the workforce work as “executive/senior level officials and managers”, as opposed to 1.68% of employees generally. See https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/employment/jobpat-eeo1/2013/index.cfm#select_label.

3. In February 2013, CTI also issued a report studying being LGBT in the Workplace. See http://www.talentinnovation.org/_private/assets/PowerOfOut-2-ExecSumm-CTI.pdf. The report found that 43% of professionals of color feel that homophobic people are common in their workplace, as opposed to 28% of Caucasians. While many companies “excel at publicizing pro-
gay policies and positions externally, there’s an ongoing need for company leaders, HR officers, and succession planners to publicize and act on them internally. But equally, if not more important, to the success of LGBT employees is the underlying organizational culture of these companies.”
Request for Elimination of Bias Credit

Our course, “Is That a Unicorn I See?—A Conversation with LGBTQ Asian American Partners” is a 75 minute course whose main goal is to educate lawyers regarding the professional development and full participation of lawyers of color and/or lawyers who identify as LGBTQ. Speakers will consist of law firm partners who identify as both Asian American and LGBTQ. Speakers will provide their thoughts on skills required to make partner (as a person of color and/or LGBTQ), visibility, mentorship and role models of diverse attorneys, diversity programs, law firm recruitment and the attraction and retention of minority associates/partners and their general role and responsibilities as diverse partners. Using personal examples, anecdotes and statistical facts drawn from the industry, speakers will also touch upon how they believe bias and prejudice can be dealt with and eliminated from the legal profession.