

A Major Differentiator in Our Industry
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When I joined Texas Instruments (TI) in 2003, I wasn't aware of our Employee Resource Groups or the Diversity Network as this topic wasn't included in new employee orientation sessions or highly promoted.

Then in March 2009, I noticed an advertisement stating that a Holocaust survivor would be speaking at TI on April 8, 2009. Being Jewish, I was most interested to attend so that I could learn more about the Holocaust and hear the stories of these survivors. Additionally, I was wondering why an event like this was being held at our company. Coincident with this event, my younger son, then 19, was preparing to embark on a trip called the "March of the Living," where his senior high school class travelled with a Holocaust survivor to visit concentration camps in Poland and then to Israel to experience Israel Independence Day, thus enabling him to experience a full range of emotions.

I felt the timing of these two events to be a striking coincidence which implored me to derive more meaning and connections. The connections began to surface when my son shared his heartfelt reflections on this experience with his mom and me upon his return, stating how grateful he was for everything he had and everything we had done for him to that point, and that he would never take anything for granted.

At the beginning of the TI Holocaust Survivor talk, and with a standing-room-only crowd, I was surprised that someone from the Jewish Initiative was introducing the event/speaker and equally surprised that this event was co-sponsored by the Christian Values Initiative. This was the first time I had heard about anything resembling a diversity initiative at TI, let alone faith-based initiatives, and I was wondering how two faith-based initiatives with different beliefs could come together to collaborate on an event such as this?

Needless to say, I was mesmerized by the Holocaust Survivors, riveted throughout, and then emotionally drained at the conclusion of the event from all that had been discussed. I did not want the speakers to stop talking or the event to ever end.

This event was so very meaningful to me, and I could not stop thinking about what I had heard and how much it meant to me. The next day, I reached out to the leaders of the faith-based initiatives who co-sponsored this event to tell them how thankful I was to both and how much this meant to me. I wanted so very much to be part of initiatives that stand behind events like this and wanted to help in any way I could. Soon thereafter, I became involved with the Jewish Diversity Initiative, serving first as co-chair and then as chair to continue and strengthen the mission of that group. Ever since that time, I have been an active participant/leader within the TI Diversity Network.

I am sure many of you are wondering how an event such as this relates to businesses such as TI and what we as employees can draw upon which would be of value to our business. When a Holocaust survivor speaks, you cannot help but just sit and listen carefully to each and every meaningful word and show the utmost respect. You also learn about perseverance when it is probably just easier to feel that there is no hope and give up. These aspects clearly are pivotal in a business climate, as we must learn to carefully listen to thoughts and ideas from others, treat them with respect and realize that these

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behaviors will foster ideas, creativity, and innovation to enable the business. There will be many projects that we undertake as part of our business, wherein things will seem hopeless and we will not attain our goals, but we must learn to persevere in these difficult circumstances and find ways to overcome obstacles and move forward to find solutions. Although we have different religious beliefs, views, and backgrounds, we always listen and show respect and use these differences as opportunities to learn, cooperate and innovate together for the benefit of all.

The Diversity Network and our Initiatives have truly instilled in me the sense that I am part of a big family at TI where we all care so deeply for each other. When one person is hurting, we are all hurting and feel inspired to demonstrate how much we care and support one another. Without hesitation, and as a united family, we come together to console, comfort, and give strength to each other.

This has been demonstrated on numerous occasions within TI, such as (a) Christian Values Initiative prayer sessions I attend as a Jew and whose members have always gone out of their way to welcome me and offer prayers for my friends and me for healing, (b) TI Unites event to gather hand-in-hand as a community to reflect and remember the lives lost in global tragedies in Bangladesh, Dallas, Belgium, Minnesota, and Louisiana, (c) solidarity event in the wake of the Synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh where the leader of each of our faith-based initiatives offered a meaningful prayer, and (d) prayers and moment of silence to honor those whose lives were lost during the shootings in El Paso and Dayton.

My discovery of the initiatives and Diversity Network which existed at TI will forever be etched in my mind, as this has enabled me to grow both personally and professionally over the years. I have learned so very much from leading and participating in a variety of events, and by carefully listening to and respecting all those I have had the privilege to network with over the years. I have been enriched by gaining a much deeper understanding of the faiths/beliefs of others through discussions and through visits to different places of worship.

I view our Diversity Network as a major differentiator in our industry which offers a competitive advantage by creating an environment which fosters a sense of family and open dialog to bring out the very best each of us has to offer in the workplace.