



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COUNCIL: CASE STUDY



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Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Councils have been in place for more than 30 years and exist in 90% of Fortune 500 firms. In U.S. corporations, 8.5% of our nation's workforce are members of a D&I Council.

A Diversity & Inclusion Council and other similar employee groups are widely used for creating organizational change and supporting organizations' D&I strategy. D&I Councils also influence organizational cultures. D&I Councils are typically made up of leaders who are influential, well respected and have the connections and ability to get things done. D&I Councils have been especially effective in helping align employee activities with the organization's D&I strategy and objectives.



Cleco Corporate Holdings LLC is a regional energy holding company that conducts its business operations through two subsidiaries, Cleco Power and Cleco Cajun. Headquartered in Pineville, Louisiana, and in business since 1935, the company has approximately 1,500 employees.

Cleco Power is a regulated electric public utility that owns 10 generating units with a total nameplate capacity of 3,360 megawatts, 11,935 miles of distribution lines and 1,317 miles of transmission lines. Cleco Power uses multiple generating sources and multiple fuels to serve approximately 288,000 customers in Louisiana through its retail business and supplies wholesale power in Louisiana and Mississippi. The company also has access to purchased power when it's needed and when it's more cost effective than our generation.

Cleco Cajun is an unregulated utility company that owns eight generating assets with a total nameplate capacity of 3,555 megawatts and contracts serving nine Louisiana cooperatives, three wholesale municipal customers and one electric utility.



In the book, “Diversity Managers: Angels of Mercy or Barbarians at the Gate, there are several best practices that result in successful and sustainable D&I Councils:

- CEO is the leader of the D&I Council
- Council meets frequently – usually monthly or quarterly
- Council establishes metrics and goals
- Council rotates leadership positions
- Council members acts as mentors
- Council supports recruitment, retention, and engagement efforts.

The proof of the ROI and the benefits of D&I is an on-going challenge. Diversity and Inclusion Councils and other associate groups are tasked with implementing D&I initiatives that will have measurable outcomes.

In order for D&I Councils to be effective, council members must understand the D&I strategy and the organization's current culture. In addition, it is important for the Council to understand what the organization wants and needs to know. Many organizations embed D&I questions into existing employee engagement surveys. However, to truly measure the organizational culture related to D&I, it is important to have an instrument that focuses specifically on D&I. The Icarus Consulting DEI Profile provides a snapshot of what the organization and everyone may need to focus on to create a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion.



Cleco Energy had a strong focus on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) for the several years. A D&I Council comprised of senior leaders was in place. Ongoing D&I education was also offered to all employees.

Due to other competing priorities, D&I became less of a strategic priority and the D&I Council lost focus. While the D&I Council remained intact, they lost support, had little influence and offered no real D&I initiatives.

With the hiring of a new VP of Human Resources (HR), there was a renewed commitment to D&I. Based on previous experience, the new HR VP realized the importance of not only having a diverse workforce but the necessity of having a culture of inclusion. Given the organization was going through a culture change, it was a perfect time to position D&I as part of the change efforts.



GOAL(S)

- Expand and reinvigorate the D&I Council
- Enhance the capability of the D&I Council by providing tools and resources
- Increase the capacity of the D&I Council by providing training and education
- Improve the cadence and volume of D&I Council communication to inform employees about the D&I Strategy and engage managers constructive dialogue

With the support of Icarus Consulting, the D&I Council expanded membership and recruited senior leaders to serve as an advisory board. A formal charter was created and four D&I Council Sub-Committees were formed, each focusing on an important D&I initiative.

The D&I Council members participated in the Icarus D&I Council Leadership Institute™ leadership development program and enhanced their ability in two areas:

- **Impact:** Transition from activity-based to results-driven team focused on supporting the D&I strategy.
- **Sustainability:** Measured impact by collecting data showing employees' anonymous and consolidated, responses in relation to the Council initiatives, programs, practices, activities, policies, and procedures.



RESULTS


- All D&I Council members completed the D&I Council Leadership Seminar
- Favorable perception of D&I Council increased 25%.
- Employee Engagement Survey analysis showed differences in perceptions based on D&I Council initiatives, experiences, and programs which led to meaningful discussion.
- D&I Council competence and capabilities was enhanced.
- D&I Council collected data which was used to direct and guide the D&I Strategy.



Cleco Energy is an organization that recognizes how a D&I Council directly impacts employee engagement and innovation. The company effectively leverages the D&I Council which show that it is a forward thinking and inclusive organization. Icarusw Consulting helped the company “begin with the end in mind.” We helped Cleco Energy gain a clear picture of the current culture by providing a snapshot and baseline which could be used to measure future progress.

By attending the Icarus D&I Council Leadership Institute, the D&I Council gained a clear picture of the Councils D&I strengths and challenges. Because of the unique feature of assessing D&I Council culture and individual competencies, we were able to tailor developmental opportunities for both the D&I Council and individual members to become more inclusive and culturally competent.

Today, Cleco’s D&I Council is focused on measuring the impact of D&I Council to support the D&I strategy and business case. While more companies are measuring the impact of their D&I Council, it’s important to remember that it’s not a “one size fits all” approach. Organizations should approach measurement of the D&I Council in different ways and at their own pace. It may begin with something as simple as measuring D&I Council initiatives or the impact of D&I Council programs. With more evidence of the impact the D&I Council has on organizational D&I objectives and outcomes, the more leaders will support and buy-in to D&I Council.

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- **Link D&I Council Metrics to D&I Strategy**
 - » Align the D&I Council strategy and metrics with the organization's D&I goals and outcome. All other core practices will flow.
 - » Diversity and inclusion metrics should be aligned with the most critical organizational goals.
 - **Leverage the Power of Engagement**
 - » Engagement is metric best-practice organizations use.
 - » D&I Councils know what drives employees are engaged and deliver excellent work.
 - **Insist on Accountability**
 - » Conduct a D&I Council assessment to establish a baseline and/or external benchmark data
 - » Link D&I Council measurement with the current management dashboard.
 - **Take action after measuring.**
 - » Conduct a root-cause analysis to define successful solutions.
 - » Assure employees understand behavioral expectations and continue to monitor and support.
 - **Move Beyond The Numbers**
 - » It's not about counting people....It's about making people count!
 - » Continue to monitor impact and d look for other sources of measuring Council success.

For information about how Icarus Consulting can help advance or accelerate the efforts of your Diversity and Inclusion Council, please contact Dr. Shelton Goode @ shelton.goode@icarusconsult.net. Please visit our website for additional case studies @ www.icarusconsult.net.



WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEB SITE:
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