

BUILDING A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The men and women leading the voluntary Magna Employee Resource Communities have a shared vision and commitment to diversity and inclusion.

The Women's ERC or Women's eXchange Community strives to empower, develop and recognize the company's female employees and attract new female talent to Magna. The Race & Ethnicity ERC or EDGE Community in the U.S. and Canada aims to promote an environment that recognizes the racial and ethnic backgrounds and interests of our employees.

The five ERC leaders provide a closer look at who they are and what motivates them to build a strong sense of community at Magna:

SETTING AN EXAMPLE

A conversation I had with Nobel Prize winner Desmond Tutu when I was the 13-year-old leader of a youth group at St. Paul's Cathedral in London, Ontario sparked something in me.

I was in awe of Archbishop Tutu who led the non-violent campaign to resolve the issue of apartheid in South Africa. We shook hands and I shared the story of knowing I was "different" from other kids in preschool. During recess, we'd pretend we were superheroes and I wanted to be Batman. But the other kids said: "You can't be Batman. Batman is not Black."

Tutu and I talked about that early experience and how there weren't a lot of people for someone like me to look up.

"Set an example for other people," he said. "Move beyond that."

His words still resonate with me today in my role as a member of Magna's Diversity & Inclusion Council and co-chair of EDGE, our race- and ethnicity-focused Employee Resource Community.

Today, I motivate and encourage people to be their best, whether I'm on the D&I Council or in my job as Magna Employee Advocate program manager. I encourage people to go beyond what they've done before to achieve new things they didn't think were possible.

This attitude is important for the success of Magna. It ensures that we are tapping into and accessing the contributions of all of our talent. If we do this, it builds up everything. And watch society follow our lead.

– Andrew Barrow, Magna Employee Advocate program manager, member of Magna's Diversity & Inclusion Council and co-chair of EDGE

As an engineer, I was on a management path in the auto industry when I “retired” in 2007 to stay home to take care of my daughter Reagan and my son Easton. After eight years of not working outside the home, I was recruited for a purchasing opportunity at Magna. I was concerned about balancing my responsibilities at home with a full-time position, so I negotiated a part-time role.

When I was promoted to AGM two years ago, there were individuals who didn’t believe I would cut it. I still have conversations with industry leaders who ask when Shaun will be joining the meeting, or if I am his assistant. I choose to challenge assumptions that girls can’t be engineers, women are afraid to get their hands dirty in operations, and success is all about the numbers and not about the people. I’m driven to prove them wrong.

Challenging people’s perceptions is why my mother decided to call me Shaun. She was a single parent and a small-business owner in the male-dominated world of retail-based photography. She wanted to make sure nobody would know if I were a male or female by my resume.

My career path has not been traditional or linear. Being open and flexible to new opportunities and speaking up to make things work for my life, challenged my own internal perceptions of what success could be. I tell other women to be open to detours because those changes could move you in a direction you could have never predicted.

I’m excited to be leading the Women’s eXchange to continue to challenge the perceptions of what women can accomplish at Magna and in their lives. We are more than what people see.

– Shaun Hintz, Magna Engineered Glass assistant general manager, chair of the Women’s eXchange

FINDING A VOICE

My home office reflects my passion and empathy for fighting for what's right.

In it you'll find books about the late U.S. Representative John Lewis, a towering figure of the Civil Rights era, and even a Ruth Bader Ginsburg doll. She's dressed in RBG's iconic judicial robes and lace collar. I don't wear lace collars, but I'm a big fan of the late U.S. Supreme Court justice who was known as a pioneering advocate for women's rights. She was somebody who took up the cause to find a voice for under-represented groups.

That's something I strive to do every day, whether I'm working with Magna's minority suppliers or helping to increase the number of women in our company and grow them into future leaders. The goal is simple: Empower, develop and attract.

At Magna, I've always had people who would advocate for me, starting with my first boss, a female program manager. She's just one of the many strong women I've worked with, and why I tell people Magna is a great company.

We've tapped into something with our Employee Resource Communities, and we're trying to deliver as fast as we can. Our events are geared toward networking and skill development. Men can join the women's group, too, as an ally. We need allies to spread the word and encourage their colleagues to join. What we're doing shows that Magna wants to be a leader in the automotive industry.

- Lisa Ross, Magna account manager/ supplier diversity manager and vice chair of the Women's eXchange Community

FINDING YOUR OWN WAY

My first automotive job was as a 16-year-old high school co-op student with no idea how the experience in the automotive corporate world would change my future. I worked in the purchasing group reporting to a woman and alongside two female powerhouse buyers. I watched these successful women and thought to myself, "I can do that." So I did.

Fourteen years later I joined Magna and found myself enjoying new challenges and career paths. Even though I had a business degree instead of an engineering degree, I still beat the odds and became one of Magna's first female General Managers. My experience as a GM ignited my passion to attract women into operational and technical roles at Magna. I want to share my experiences through the Women's eXchange. Whether working in a plant or a corporate role, the possibilities for women at Magna are endless.

Within our ERC, there's a group called Mentoring Matters that meets every month. The module we went through during our January meeting was on approachability. We interviewed people we've worked with and asked them their opinion of us. We asked them if we were approachable. I was excited to hear people say I'm a great listener, that I have a strong sense of empathy, and that my energy is contagious.

It's been rewarding to meet so many Magna women from around the world and to experience their energy. Knowing we all have an avenue to talk to other women and get additional support is amazing. We also have goals aimed at retaining all the strong women we already have, giving them tools they need to be successful, and to attract even more amazing women.

– Stacey Burroughs, Magna Lighting global director of sales, co-chair of the Women's eXchange Community

OPEN THE CONVERSATION

People's feelings and experiences are important to me. That's why opening a culture of conversation at Magna and providing leaders with the tools to have these conversations is so critical.

It doesn't need to be formalized. It is taking the time to actually listen, show you are listening and that it matters to you. It's asking simple questions, such as "Are there barriers and what can we do to remove them?" The conversation can be about experiences in childhood or outside of work. If systemic issues exist outside of work, I would carve out the time and ask: "How are you doing today?"

A simple conversation like that can change things.

I was raised with a rainbow around me and as a diverse family we celebrate every color. I was the only Brown person in my school, and the first born Canadian to my parents who came from Guyana in the early 1970s. Rather than eat the West Indian food with the strong smell of curry my mom would pack for lunch, I would throw it away and be hungry. A white friend and ally of my mom's listened to the story and told her to pack sandwiches in my lunch, so I could fit in. She gave my mom support when she needed it.

We have made incremental progress since then. Today, my older daughter Riannah asks for homemade ethnic food in her school lunch. She is confident and she celebrates our Indo-Caribbean roots.

With the ERCs, we're listening more, raising awareness and creating an overall enhanced employee experience where everyone can feel they belong.

– Michelle Rafat, Magna senior manager for talent attraction and employer branding, co-chair of EDGE, HR liaison for Women's eXchange

