

Press Coverage | August 15, 2022

How Law Firms Can Develop a Diversity Action Plan

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Tiffany Southerland, Troutman Pepper's director of diversity and inclusion, is quoted in the *Law360 Pulse* article titled, "[How Law Firms Can Develop a Diversity Action Plan](#)."

Troutman Pepper Hamilton Sanders LLP has designated a partner from every practice group as a diversity, equity, and inclusion partner tasked with helping to implement the firm's plan, according to diversity and inclusion director Tiffany Southerland.

"It is always really great to have a group of people with varying perspectives," Southerland said.

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Buy-in from senior leadership is extremely important, as is their support from the very beginning, according to Southerland.

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After a merger created Troutman Pepper in summer 2020, the firm developed an action plan based on an internal survey around diversity and inclusion initiatives, with specific questions about "responses to racial justice" following the reckoning ignited by the death of George Floyd, Southerland said.

"You have to start by identifying the goals and get clear about what is driving the firm's desire to have a plan," Southerland said. "Gathering data is particularly important ... it allows you to take a fresh approach and develop a goal or a plan that's responsive to what you now know as opposed to what may have been true in the past, or what your assumptions might be."

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Firms can also track their success with regular engagement surveys, but experts said they should be flexible with their plans.

"They should not treat an action plan as set in stone, but something that can be living and evolve over time," Southerland said.

Troutman Pepper hired a consultant to expand the firm's current diversity action plan.

“We’re adding more ways to measure what success would look like,” Southerland said.