

**Bertina Ceccarelli and Susanne Tedrick**

Foreword by **Michael C. Bush**, Global CEO of Great Place to Work



# Innovating for Diversity

Lessons from Top Companies  
Achieving Business Success  
through Inclusivity

**WILEY**



# Advance Praise for *Innovating for Diversity*

*“DEI is top of mind for virtually all executives regardless of the sector that they are leading in. This book highlights the key principles that are critical to success in any change effort: courage, leadership, collaboration, and trust. With compelling and detailed case studies, readers will learn how to put these principles into action.”*

—Jane Wei-Skillern  
Senior Fellow, Center for Social Sector Leadership  
UC Berkeley Haas School of Business

*“The ultimate reward for truly innovating to form more diverse teams is a culture of belonging, which is absolutely necessary for any company that wants dazzling performance. I was excited and inspired by the case studies that show how great leaders are shifting from just a compliance view of DE&I to building teams where everyone is motivated to be exponential.”*

—Earl Newsome  
Vice President & Chief Information Officer, Cummins  
Founder, TechPACT

*“This book dispels the notion that innovation and diversity are incompatible. It shatters the long-held belief that change must be slow. It demonstrates in tangible ways using present-day examples how companies large and small can radically improve their diversity efforts and in so doing enhance the bottom line.”*

—Larry Quinlan  
Board Director and Former Global Chief Information Officer  
Deloitte

*“When it comes to DEI, saying the right thing is easier than doing the right thing. Through eye-opening stories and data, this book specifies the mindsets, metrics, and methods to realize growth pathways for people and businesses of all sizes. The authors provide perceptive questions to discern root causes of deleterious fixed practices and principles. Equally important, they illustrate the leadership behaviors plus organizational tools, which create conditions for the maximum number of diverse people to flourish and collectively accelerate innovation.”*

—Roselinde Torres  
Leadership Expert and TED Speaker

*“The authors of Innovating for Diversity bring us inspiring examples of corporate leaders courageous enough to question established practices and make substantive changes in the way they recruit, hire, develop, and advance employees. In doing so, these innovators teach us a valuable lesson: Creating truly diverse, inclusive, and innovative workplaces is good for people—and good for business.”*

—Maria Flynn  
President and CEO  
Jobs for the Future

*“Meaningful diversity and equity practices are essential to the success of any organization, and I can think of no better guides through this complex process than Bertina and Susanne. Innovating for Diversity should be on the bookshelf of every manager and business leader in this country. The case studies are unique and illuminating, the advice is practical and adaptable, and readers will no doubt walk away inspired and committed to create work cultures grounded in inclusion.”*

—Dr. Tarika Barrett  
CEO  
Girls Who Code

*“Having been on my own journey through life and career as a leader who happens to be Latino, I have my own stories to tell. Often, we get so caught up in the emotion and the cause, that data and facts are overlooked. I was moved and inspired by this book that brings the business cases, the stories, and for me the cultural root causes to life. We can keep talking DEIB, but this is a timely read of real wisdom and data that will impact the future of life and work in America.”*

—Guillermo Diaz Jr  
Founder and CEO Conectado, Chair HITEC,  
Board Member, Former CIO Cisco Systems

*“I was so moved by the candid conversations of the executives featured in this book, and by how the authors captured their authentic, vulnerable emotions. The reflections offered in these pages should serve as a roadmap for companies who are striving to develop meaningful, measurable, and impactful DEI strategies.”*

—Viola Maxwell-Thompson  
CEO and Board Director

*“This timely, inspiring book holds a mirror to the business world, lifting the lid on poorly implemented DEI strategies and showing the pitfalls before guiding the way to success through examples, hard data, and fresh ideas. The result is a powerful case for the courage and humility to lean into our humanity so we can reap the full benefits of more genuinely diverse, kinder, safer, more creative, and more exciting workplaces.”*

—Peter Mousaferiadis  
Founder and CEO  
Cultural Infusion

*“In Innovating for Diversity [the authors] explore the humble but crucial role that diversity plays in driving innovation and vice versa. Through a series of case studies of large enterprises and small businesses, the authors provide a roadmap for organisations looking to foster a more diverse culture while identifying and dismantling systemic barriers to innovation. With its timely and relevant insights, Innovating for Diversity is a must-read for business leaders focused on increasing retention and driving competitive advantage in today’s world.”*

—Rajesh Jethwa  
Chief Technology Officer  
Digiterre

*“The authors offer a unique presentation, which makes inclusion initiatives more relevant to those across the professional spectrum, not solely those in the C-Suite, based on one key tenet: that acknowledging the existence of imperfections is the first step to allowing real innovation to flourish. This book allows readers the opportunity to challenge existing presuppositions and think critically about future initiatives.”*

—Richard Gardner  
CEO  
Modulus

*“As [the authors] state early in the book, ‘diversity drives innovation.’ Innovation is how we compete in an increasingly global economy. This is just one of many reasons that DEI has finally gotten the attention it deserves over the past few years, and this is one of the most timely and pivotal books I think has been released on the topic yet! Throughout these pages, these two women break down time and again the cutting edge of this rapidly expanding and crucial piece of business. With this book, how DEI works, and how to maximize it for your business (small or large) will make sense! It is well worth the read.”*

—Stephanie Scheller  
Founder  
Grow Disrupt

*“[The authors] have successfully presented a framework for DEI and not simply a checklist of things to do. [The] book helps executive leaders to see the fundamental reasons why DEI is imperative beyond the monetary benefits. . . This book is a beautiful symbiosis of diversity in action.”*

—Meiko S. Patton  
Author

*“Innovating for Diversity blesses us with powerfully well-thought-out and practical strategies that explore the deepest issues confronting organizations across individuals of all sizes in the area of Diversity and Inclusion. More importantly it helps us put several issues that occur in our organizations into perspective. This book has fundamental and empowering information that we all need.”*

—Omu Obilor  
CEO  
Thrive with Omu

# **Innovating for Diversity**







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Achieving Business Success  
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Bertina Ceccarelli  
Susanne Tedrick

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*To anyone who has ever had the courage to challenge the rules  
when they weren't fair.*



# About the Authors



**Bertina Ceccarelli**—Bertina is on a mission to advance racial and gender equity in the tech industry and disrupt the status quo to build a more inclusive workplace. As the CEO of NPower, one of the most successful nonprofits in North America committed to helping young adults and military-connected individuals launch tech careers, she breaks down barriers to social and economic mobility. She is endlessly inspired by the life journeys of NPower alumni, and by the forward-looking corporate employers who see brilliance where others see limitations. Under her leadership NPower has grown its budget five-fold in the last six years and today serves over 2,000 individuals annually.

As a leader, she understands that any organization devoted to advancing diversity and equity must itself model an inclusive workplace, providing opportunities for growth and leadership at all levels. Bertina has been intentional about building a team of extraordinary colleagues who bring their deep professional expertise as well as their personal experiences to the mission. NPower’s team demonstrates how the power of diversity delivers better solutions.

She embraced the mission of NPower after a long career in the corporate sector and with a deeply personal set of motivations. Growing up in a working-class family and the first to graduate from high school, getting a college degree was not a forgone conclusion. It was only through

the coaching and counseling of adults who took the time to care that she was set on a very different path, earning a BS in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research at U.C. Berkeley and an MBA from Harvard Business School. It brings her joy to help others connect with their pathway, and to inspire a new generation of leaders to operate at the intersection of good business and better humanity.

Bertina’s commitment to helping others break social and economic mobility barriers has led to her involvement in strategic alliance organizations, including founding member of TechPACT; member, CEO Action; steering committee member, American’s Promise; Wall Street Journal CEO Council; as well as membership on Forbes Council, NationSwell, and Concordia communities. She was named as one of the Tech Industry’s Brightest Superstars by the US Black Engineer & IT magazine. She is an engaged storyteller and speaks frequently at association and industry events and conferences such as SXSW EDU, JFF Horizons, SIM, ASU+GSV, and is a frequent guest commentator across numerous media outlets.

A native Californian, Bertina is a proud resident of Brooklyn where she lives with her husband and teenage son.



**Susanne Tedrick**—The tech industry wasn’t always on Susanne Tedrick’s radar. The Northwestern University grad enjoyed a decade-long career in operations and administrative-type roles before craving a new challenge and embarking upon a career change. It was a prescient move. With a critically acclaimed book under her belt, Susanne Tedrick is not only a groundbreaker but one of the leading lights in a

rapidly evolving industry.

Her first job in the tech industry, after orchestrating her career turnaround, was as a cloud technical specialist at IBM for which she received a Rising Star of The Year award in 2018 from CompTIA. The subsequent feature in CompTIA World Magazine led to the opportunity to write her first critically acclaimed book, *Women of Color In Tech: A Blueprint for Inspiring and Mentoring the Next Generation of Technology Innovators*. It detailed her personal journey into tech as a Black woman, helped to inform and inspire women of color to pursue tech careers, and made the case that diversity, equity, and inclusion benefits everyone in the technology industry.

Tedrick joined Microsoft as an infrastructure specialist for the Azure for Sports sales team covering all major U.S.-based sports leagues and

affiliated teams. She currently works as a technical trainer in the organization, delivering outcomes-based training to Microsoft's leading enterprise customers on its cloud computing platform, Azure.

Susanne has previously been featured in many influential tech and business media outlets including *Worth Magazine*, *CompTIA*, *PECB Insights*, and *CIO.com*. She has also appeared on numerous podcasts, YouTube interviews, and panel discussions. Her awards and honors include Microsoft's Platinum Club Award, Thinkers360 Top 50 Thought Leader in Cloud Computing, and CompTIA's Diversity in Technology Leadership Award in 2020.

Susanne has taken an active role in community service with several nonprofits including formerly serving as chair of the Advancing Tech Talent and Diversity Executive Council for CompTIA. She is also a coalition member for NPower's Command Shift initiative.

Susanne holds a degree in Communication Systems from Northwestern University and is currently an Executive MBA candidate at New York University's Stern School of Business. Outside of work, Susanne spends time with her wonderful husband Paul, is on an ongoing journey to teach herself electric guitar, and casually indulges in her love of video games.







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