

CULTURAL COMPETENCY CORNER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF
RISE SERVICES, INC.

Dear Rise Employee:

In this edition of the Cultural Competency Corner, we will spend a little time getting to know Steven Hunter, Diversity Officer. In this issue we will learn about Steven's perspective on diversity, equity, and inclusion. We will also discuss his vision of cultural competency for RISE Services, Inc. We hope you enjoy this edition.



Steven Hunter,
Diversity Officer

RISE CORPORATE VALUES



FUN FACTS ABOUT STEVEN

- FAVORITE FOOD: TACOS
- FAVORITE HOBBY: COACHING YOUTH BASKETBALL
- FAVORITE BASKETBALL PLAYER: MICHAEL JORDAN
- FAVORITE TV SHOW: FORENSIC FILES
- FAVORITE ACTOR: DENZEL WASHINGTON
- FAVORITE MOVIE: SCARFACE
- FAVORITE BASEBALL TEAM: CHICAGO CUBS
- FEARS: HEIGHTS AND BUTTERFLIES



APRIL IS NATIONAL
**AUTISM
AWARENESS
MONTH**

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This newsletter is designed with you in mind. If you have content ideas, cultural events, or cultural celebrations to share, please forward them to Steven Hunter for consideration.

A CONVERSATION WITH STEVEN

Cultural Competency from the perspective of a Diversity Officer

Fountain: How has your career in the NBA prepared you for your role as Diversity Officer?

- Hunter: 10 years in the NBA allowed me to play with, meet, and cultivate relationships with people from all backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, and sexuality. I was exposed to different biases and viewpoints. Spending so much time with people from different backgrounds, including different continents, influenced the person I am today. The time I spent in the NBA opened my eyes to the diversity of people. It allowed me to view them through their experiences and perspectives.

Fountain: How has your time in the NBA influenced how you see and deal with cultural conflict?

- Hunter: I learned valuable lessons on facing issues, talking through problems, and understanding where others are coming from. Being with your team mates every day, you learn how to develop healthy conflict resolution skills. You can't just walk away from issues. You must learn to effectively work through them.

Fountain: We have developed a working definition of diversity for RISE. But I would like to know, what does diversity mean to you?

- Hunter: Diversity are the differences we see in people in terms of race, religion, and sexuality for example. The differences in perspective and values are a necessity for decision making and collaboration in a workplace or on a team.

Fountain: How do you personally challenge stereotypes and promote sensitivity and inclusion?

- Hunter: As a 7-foot tall, black man, I understand stereotypes. I have had challenges with many stereotypes throughout my life. I understand the hurt that those stereotypes and perceptions cause. For example, I have been in situations where I did not feel welcome when walking into a room. I use those experiences to influence how I treat others. I try to make sure I make eye contact with everyone to make them feel seen and welcome.

Fountain: What goals do you have for Rise? What changes do you want to see in the Culture?

- Hunter: First and foremost, I want to ensure that RISE employees have an increased awareness of our DE&I efforts. I want to make sure that we continue to strive toward cultural competence and increased understanding of each other. I want all employees to understand why diversity, inclusion and cultural competence are important. This focus, I feel, will demonstrate our belief that each employee is valuable.

Fountain: Do you view RISE employees as a team? If so what contributions do you expect each employee to make?

- Hunter: RISE has done a great job rolling out this initiative. The survey demonstrated there is an opportunity to improve the education level and awareness brought to issues of diversity and inclusion. We ask that each employee commit to educating themselves about cultural competency. We want them to sacrifice the time needed to learn about bias and how it affects others. We hope that each employee will commit to treating each other the way they treat their own family members. We want each employee to be intentional about how they interact with one another.

Fountain: What can employees expect from the Cultural Competency Ambassadors?

- Hunter: The Cultural Competency Ambassadors are a point of contact for the employees. They will inform the employees of our endeavors, provide employee feedback to the organization, and help with decision making when it comes to programming. They are our eyes and ears.

Fountain: How will you measure the success of your initiative?

- Hunter: We hope deploying our survey at regular intervals will show an increase in DE&I awareness and growth with our employees. We will continue to use tools such as our newsletter, website, and different resources to talk about our collective journey. We hope these increased efforts will show up in our survey and move us forward in a culturally competent way.

More About Steven

After being a first round selection (15th overall) in the 2001 NBA draft, Steven Hunter enjoyed a successful 10-year career in the NBA. As a talented Center and Forward, Steven's abilities were on regular display as a member of the Phoenix Suns, Orlando Magic, Philadelphia 76ers, Denver Nuggets, and Memphis Grizzlies. Steven also enjoyed international play in Italy.

Steven worked as the community ambassador for the Phoenix Suns for 8 years (2013-2021). In serving the Suns, Steven spearheaded community initiatives that involved diversity, equity, and inclusion. Steven also conducted over 100 keynote speeches on behalf of the Suns. His motivational speeches captivated audiences of all races, religions, and sexualities. Steven brings his years of training and experience in community relations to his role as Rise's Chief Diversity Officer.

Steven founded the Steven Hunter Youth Foundation in 2015. The goal of the foundation is to assist underserved youth in developing life skills through mentoring and teamwork.

Steven and his wife Erika have four children. They are Nylaa 18, Steven 14, Blaise 9, and Zoey 5.

Recommended Reading:

Both, J. (2016).Autism Equality in the Workplace: Removing Barriers and Challenging Discrimination. Philadelphia, PA: Jessica Kingsley Publishing.