

# Creating Lasting Change

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Our DEI Progress Report

2022

**HOTWIRE**

# A Letter from our CEO

Driving positive impact, from the inside out

In June 2020, on the heels of international protests on racial inequity following the murder of George Floyd, we set out to integrate our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategy with our three-year business plan. We did this to ensure that our DEI goals—to create a more diverse workforce, foster a culture of inclusion, and drive positive, lasting change in our industry—would be core to how we operate and measure success as a business. This report details our progress against our goals to-date. There has been a lot of progress, as well as recognition that we have more work ahead.

When I reflect on what we have accomplished, I am proud of the speed at which we acted on our strategy: rethinking our recruiting and hiring process to diversify our candidate pool, delivering agency-wide bias and inclusion trainings and programs, and launching the Hotwire Ignite Possibility Program (HIPP) globally to direct more of our services to organizations led by or supporting people of color. We've forged new partnerships with industry game changers and delivered DEI campaigns for our clients that made the award shortlists. Every one of these efforts required a commitment from many, many people, at all levels, in offices around the world. I am also proud of the number of people who have spoken up, asking questions and offering ideas; who have stepped up, helping launch new programs and initiatives; and who have showed up, to share, listen, learn, and be allies. I'm grateful for the courage and vulnerability and the bold and fresh thinking—this has helped to guide our strategy and push us to do better. Our progress is as much about that as it is about the data and the programs.



As I look forward, I know we can do more to be a place where we all feel we are valued and supported to experience limitless success—a place where we feel seen, understood, and heard for who we are. This is a priority, and where we have the most work to do. We are still in the process of understanding how to embody inclusion, day in and day out, for our 300+ person team who live across seven countries—and we will get there. We are also focused on ways to diversify our senior team, and will continue to create programs, like HIPP, that drive positive, lasting change in our industry.

I'm excited by what's ahead. We are up to the challenge and aspire to lead the industry towards systemic change where diversity, equity, and inclusion goals are integral to overall business goals. I invite you all to join us—employees, clients, partners, and peers—to create the future we want to see, together.

**Heather Kernahan**  
CEO, Hotwire Global Communications

# Our DEI Strategy & Goals

## Our three-year strategy

- Diversify our employee population from the top down
- Create an inclusive environment where differences are celebrated and understood
- Align our services with our DEI values and vision

## Our three-year goals

We have set specific goals to be achieved by June 2023 that map to the strategy.

- **25%+** of our mid-senior team\* represent People of Color (POC). This is self-reported data. **We are currently at 34% in the US and 14% in the UK.\*\***
- **85%+** of our team feel that they can be themselves at Hotwire. This is measured in our annual employee survey. **We are currently at 73%.**
- **85%+** of our team feel that people understand who they are. This is measured in our annual employee survey. **We are currently at 61%.**

\*To-date, we have been reporting this for our mid-senior team, defined as managers and above. Moving forward, we will be narrowing in on the racial and ethnic diversity of our senior team (associate director / vice president and above), as this is a priority for us. Using this revised definition, we are currently at 18% in the US and 16% in the UK. We will also be adding a goal around the racial and ethnic diversity of our global team, and expanding our definition of diversity, in future reporting.

\*\*Currently, this goal only reflects the data from our US and UK offices, as other countries where we have offices prohibit disclosing diversity data.



"DEI is at the heart of the Hotwire thoughtful culture, along with wellness and work-life integration. We believe that people operate at their best when they can be themselves, are understood, and in a safe environment where they are fully seen and heard."

**Kam White,**  
Head of People and Culture,  
Hotwire Global

# Diversity by the Numbers

## Tracking change over time

Transparency is key to ensuring accountability, and we remain committed to reporting the data we collect and the change over time related to diversity. We recognize that this data is not yet comprehensive as it focuses solely on gender, race, and ethnicity, and there are many other areas of diversity to be addressed in the workplace. One recent change we have made this year is expanding the options related to gender identification to be more representative. As we continue this work, we will continue to expand the data we provide. As also noted above, our data is only for our US and UK offices (other countries prohibit disclosing diversity data) and is voluntarily self-reported either through our People & Culture (P&C) database or during our annual DEI survey.

### In summary, these numbers tell us:

- For both gender and racial/ethnic diversity, in both the US and UK, we are making steady progress towards our goals.
- We know from the segmentation we've done that we need to focus more on racial/ethnic diversity at the senior level, which is less diverse than at the junior-to-mid level.
- These numbers are useful in helping us to understand certain trends, however we need to also look at the qualitative data to have a more holistic view.



US: Gender	US 2020	US 2021	% Change
Source: Self-reported employee data from P&C database			
Female	85%	80%	-5%
Male	15%	20%	5%
Nonbinary	0%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%



US: Race / Ethnicity			
Source: Self-reported employee data from P&C database	US 2020	US 2021	% Change
White	74%	59%	-15%
Black	3%	9%	6%
Hispanic	7%	10%	3%
Asian	10%	14%	4%
Two or More Races	6%	8%	2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%	0%
People of Color on senior team (VP and above)	NA	18%	NA
People of Color total team	NA	41%	NA

UK: Gender			
Source: Self-reported employee data from DEI employee survey	UK 2020	UK 2021	% Change
Woman	70%	65%	-5%
Man	28%	30%	3%
Genderqueer or non binary	0%	0%	0%
Agender	0%	0%	0%
None of the above	0%	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	2%	5%	3%

UK: Ethnicity			
Source: Self-reported employee data from DEI employee survey	UK 2020	UK 2021	% Change
White	87%	77%	-10%
Black	0%	0%	0%
Asian	4%	7%	3%
Mixed (Two or More Races)	2%	2%	0%
Prefer not to say	2%	12%	10%
Other (please specify)	4%	2%	-2%
People of Color on senior team (associate director and above)	NA	16%	NA
People of Color total team	NA	18%	NA

# Internal Programs & Processes

Building a diverse and inclusive community and culture

## Global Recruitment Processes

In 2020, we initiated an audit of all our recruitment processes globally and issued guidelines on how to recruit to maximize diversity. This includes broadening our recruiting network by adding recruitment partners who specialize in reaching underrepresented communities, like **HUE**, a platform built to advocate change by amplifying voices of color and supporting career paths in marketing, and **10,000 Black Interns**, a UK program that seeks to offer 2,000 internships in a variety of industries each year for five consecutive years.

## Talent Engagement & Development

Since 2020, we have partnered with **Chelsea C. Williams**, DEI Consultant and Trainer, and her team, to conduct listening sessions and lead training and monthly workshops for our US staff, in addition to coaching for managers and senior leaders, to expand their awareness and provide information and resources on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics such as fostering and promoting cultures that support topics including, but not limited to: psychological safety, intersectionality, gender inclusion, and allyship.

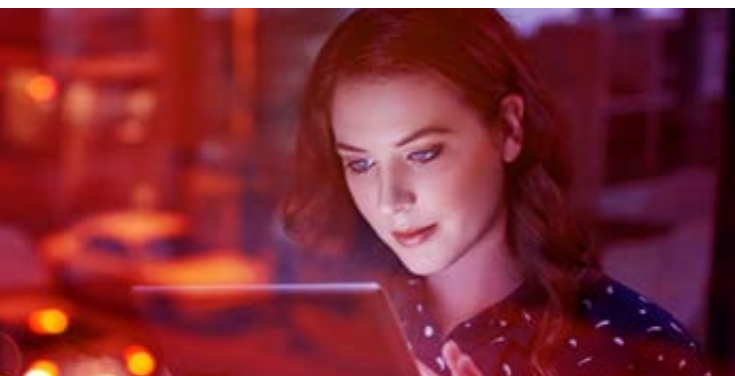
## DEI Sub Councils

Hotwire currently has two employee-led DEI Sub Councils operating globally, one for People of Color and one for LGBTQIA+. These grassroots internal groups bring together self-identified members of each community as well as allies to provide a safe environment for groups to share opportunities and challenges. Our DEI Sub Councils have also helped to refine our DEI strategy and provide useful feedback along the way.



**“With the help of external experts and intently listening to internal feedback, we’ve redesigned our processes and introduced new programs that aim to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive place to work.”**

**Tiffany Ankenman,**  
Head of People and Culture,  
Hotwire North America



# External Programs & Initiatives

## Driving industry-wide impact

### Hotwire Ignite Possibility Program (HIPP)

We launched **HIPP** in February 2021 as a way to direct more of our resources in support of the people and organizations creating meaningful and sustainable change in the world through technology innovation. With HIPP, we committed US\$1 million globally in pro bono brand marketing and public relations services to tech and tech-enabled organizations led by or supporting people of color and other relevant groups. HIPP is currently running in the US and UK, Australia, France, and Germany.

The end goal of HIPP is to help ensure more organizations that are advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion through leadership and technology innovation scale and succeed in today's competitive tech sector.

**Listed below** are the nine organizations we have selected and worked with so far, and we will continue to solicit and select new participants this year.



"I believe it's incredibly important to share our resources to help companies that may not have the time, money, or support to meet their goals. Having helped shape HIPP from the beginning, I feel proud to work at a place that is dedicated to these initiatives."

**Jennifer Headley,**  
Senior Director,  
Hotwire North America

**Acces Inclusive Tech**, a French IT service provider helping to build a more inclusive labor market through professional tech training and support for those most in need.



**Full Circle Fund**, a nonprofit community leveraging professionals' financial and intellectual capital to accelerate nonprofits and build a better San Francisco Bay Area.



**Go Flyy**, an on-demand, same-day delivery and returns service for fashion, beauty and wellness products, currently operating in various US cities.



**Husmus**, an online service that aims to make renting in the easy and affordable in order to build a world where everyone can enjoy renting privately.



**Indigitek**, a community of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders that aim to increase the participation and success of Indigenous Australian people in the tech industry.



**Kodiko**, a nonprofit organization in France that helps refugees find jobs through their "refugee-employee" co-training program in the workplace.



**Mentalis**, the first provider in Germany offering people with mental illnesses seamless, digital aftercare after treatment in the hospital.



**Menther**, a digital platform helping to empower and advance women globally through mentorship matching and support.



**Storyskimo**, an online platform leveraging audio and podcasting as a language and learning development tool for children.



## Hotwire Into Tech

**Hotwire Into Tech** was created to expand and diversify the pool of talent for tech PR, marketing, and communications roles, especially at the mid-to-senior level. Launched in December 2021, Hotwire Into Tech is a free skill building course designed to provide an overview of the tech industry for experienced marketing and communications professionals who may be interested in transitioning to a job in tech. This 3-module online class, led by industry insiders, offers tips for how to get a job in tech and shares insights on what it's really like to work in tech from leaders in the field.





## The Twin Cities PR BIPOC Career Explorer

In partnership with other regional communications agencies and consultancies, the Hotwire Minneapolis team co-founded **The Twin Cities PR BIPOC Career Explorer**, an externship program designed for students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and interested in the practice of public relations and communications. The mission of the organization is to diversify the make-up of the PR industry to better represent the world and the messages we put into it.

## Margarita Bly

Our Hotwire Spain team founded **Margarita Bly**, a think-tank made up of PR and communications professionals, as well as journalists, committed to paving the way for future female tech communicators by encouraging young women and girls to pursue careers in STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). Since early 2021, Margarita Bly has been hosting events and speaking out about the critical role of women in tech journalism and communications.



**"Margarita Bly has been an incredible opportunity for our team to help raise the visibility of women in technology, innovation, and communications in Spain and contribute to a more diverse world."**

**Gonzalo Fernandez,**  
Marketing Manager,  
Hotwire Spain



**"We have work to do to diversify the make-up of the PR industry in order to better represent the world we live in. Our hope is that this coalition will educate a diverse group of students on the work we do so they'll pursue a career in PR."**

**Kelsey Quickstad,**  
Vice President,  
Hotwire North America

# Our Work with Clients

## Partnering to lead by example

We thrive on collaborating with clients to deliver industry-leading programs and campaigns on an array of DEI-related issues. Here are some highlights of that work:

### Working with Kiva to cut through the noise on International Women's Day

Kiva, an online lending platform connecting lenders to entrepreneurs, has helped women access over US\$3 billion in loans to fund their businesses throughout the past decade and half. Kiva came to Hotwire with the goal of showcasing their strong legacy in funding women and women entrepreneurs on International Women's Day.

Hotwire worked with Kiva to develop a campaign to redefine what a powerful woman represents in 2020. We worked with ten diverse and empowering female influencers to share their answers to the statement "a powerful woman is..." through new social content. Local media and consumers were invited to an event with the mayor in Oakland and were encouraged to fill in a banner with the statement "A Powerful Woman Is...", to receive a \$25 Kiva gift card. The campaign resulted in local and national news coverage profiling lenders and business owners on the Kiva platform.

### Establishing credibility for a vital diversity promotion

In his June 2020 blog post, Cloudera's CEO Rob Bearden made a commitment to take deliberate and decisive action to address inequality in their workplace and communities. As part of this commitment, the then head of diversity, inclusion, and learning, Sarah Shin, was elevated to the newly created position of Chief Diversity Officer.

As a new C-level executive, Sarah needed to establish her credibility among the company's employees and external stakeholders. Hotwire partnered with Cloudera prior to the promotion announcement to develop Sarah's thought leadership platform, personal narrative, and internal and external communication strategy.

The result was a seamless announcement of the promotion, with a consistent narrative in messaging, content, and executive communications internally—from all-company emails to the global All Hands and Sales Kick Off meetings—and externally with partners, customers, and the media. The work also guided Sarah's communications and messaging within her own newly established organization and continues to serve as the foundation of her thought leadership platform today.



## Ideating with Husmus to uncover new audience insights and opportunities

In 2021, the Hotwire London team held the first ideation session with Hotwire Ignite Possibility Program (HIPP) participant **Husmus**, an app that makes renting easy and affordable so everyone can enjoy renting privately.

The session gave the Hotwire-Husmus team an opportunity to work collaboratively on audience insights that could underpin a successful communications campaign. After our creative brainteaser, we discussed our personal experiences of renting and how emotionally charged and stressful it can be, from both sides—tenants and landlords. We also discussed examples of what other brands have done that have had a powerful impact, and looked at what methods we could use to have a similar effect for Husmus.

The outcome of this session is now being used to develop a targeted and impactful comms strategy for Husmus.



“It was great to spend a few hours thinking creatively about our marketing and communications strategy. Hotwire really understood the problem we’re trying to solve and I look forward to developing these creative ideas further.”

**Sarah Wernér,**  
Founder of Husmus

# Awards & Recognition

## In the Diversity & Inclusion category

We are proud to have made the shortlist of finalists for these industry awards:



2021 CSR & Diversity Award in the CSR & ESG Social Impact Cause Advocacy Campaign category for our work with Kiva.org.



Championing Diversity 2021 Award recognizing PR agencies for championing diversity, inclusivity, and change.



Diversity and Inclusion 2021 Award celebrating organizations or individuals that champion diversity and inclusivity.



2022 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Awareness category for our work with Kiva.org on their International Women's Day Campaign.

# Media, Insights & Happenings

## Hotwire in the news



“Every tech business, including Hotwire, has an important role to play in creating an inclusive environment where differences are celebrated.”

**Jaime Nelson, Managing Director, Hotwire Australia** spoke to **Telum Media** about the Hotwire Ignite Possibility Program.



“Doing good work is the lens through which we feel we can make a difference, and what Black History Month is really all about is asking other organizations what they are doing too.”

**Natasha Gay, Senior Account Director, Hotwire UK** spoke to **Management Today** about how businesses are celebrating Black History Month.

## Hotwire Insights blog

- Laura Macdonald, Co-President, Hotwire North America, shares our DEI progress in North America as of August 2021. **“Committed to Change: Where we are today.”**
- Natasha Gay, Senior Account Director, Hotwire UK, shares her take on Black History Month. **“UK Black History Month, why always me?”**





## Events around the world



### Tech marketing with purpose

Hotwire Vice President, Kelsey Quickstad, spoke on a panel, “How to Scale Tech Marketing with Purpose: Elevating Minority Founders’ Platforms, and Reaching Underserved Communities through Thoughtful Communications,” on September 21, 2021 as part of the Twin Cities Start Up Week events.



### Diversifying communications

Christa Conte Alenier, Executive Vice President and Hotwire Head of Digital Commerce, spoke at a PR Council webinar on November 18, 2021 about “Data, Digital, and Diversity – The Evolution of the Communications Career.” Joined by industry peers, Christa discussed the need to create more diversity in PR and communications.

### Hotwire-hosted events

As part of our involvement in the [Twin Cities BIPOC PR Career Explorers](#) initiative, hosted a panel on BIPOC PR Careers and Digital Communications on January 28, 2021.

Hotwire Spain hosted three industry events in 2021 with [Margarita Bly](#). Each event brought together tech media and industry leaders to discuss the challenges for women working in tech and science journalism and ways to encourage more girls to pursue careers in STEM.



# Industry Partnerships

Joining forces for lasting change

We are a **Diversity Action Alliance** pledge signatory and provide an annual submission of DEI data and progress.



We offer mentoring through **Lagrant Foundation**, an organization whose mission is to increase the number of ethnic minorities in the fields of advertising, marketing, and public relations.



We support **HUE**, a platform built to advocate change by amplifying voices of color and supporting career paths in marketing.



We are members of **FELGBT**, an NGO in Spain that brings together more than 50 Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual, Intersexual and other entities in support of sexual, family, and gender diversity.



We support **10,000 Black Interns**, a UK program that seeks to offer 2,000 internships in a variety of industries each year for five consecutive years.



**Join Us**  
Together, we can.

[www.hotwireglobal.com](http://www.hotwireglobal.com)

We cannot achieve our goal of positive and lasting change in our industry alone. We invite everyone at Hotwire and all of our clients, partners, and peers to come on this journey with us. Please reach out to us with your ideas and feedback at [info@hotwireglobal.com](mailto:info@hotwireglobal.com) and stay in touch with us along the way.