

Jordan McDaniel

From: Charles W. McDaniel
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 11:50 AM
Subject: My Thoughts on Recent Events: Listening and Learning

Good morning,

While processing the death of George Floyd and the subsequent worldwide protests and reactions, I have been grappling with a few things:

- How do I adequately express my own feelings regarding Mr. Floyd's death and his mistreatment?
- What do I share with my Hilldrup family who I am sure is trying to process this as well?
- What can or should Hilldrup do to support greater equity and racial justice at Hilldrup, in our communities and in our country?

While it's difficult to put my feelings regarding these recent events into words, it has not been difficult for me to come to and to share the following thoughts:

- What happened to Mr. Floyd at the hands of the four Minneapolis police officers is horrible and inexcusable;
- Mr. Floyd is one of countless Black and African-Americans who have been excluded, mistreated and sometimes killed simply for being Black;
- Our country has not successfully dealt with systemic racism and has not effectively brought about criminal system reform;
- Being silent on these issues is no longer acceptable; it makes us complicit.

Mr. Floyd's death has created a watershed moment in history, sparking a national and worldwide outcry for social change and the major reform of how law enforcement officials interact with and treat Black citizens.

These issues affect me personally. As you all know, I was born in and am a lifetime resident of Fredericksburg. Throughout my life, I have befriended, attended school with, played sports with, interacted with and worked with people from all walks of life. Their experiences and perspectives have allowed me to have a greater appreciation and respect for, simply put, "differences." I know that my life experience has been vastly different than others who don't look like me. My experience as a White male is quite different than how a Black male experiences the world.

As such, I cannot begin to tell you what it is like to walk in the shoes of a Black or Brown friend. What I can share is that, throughout the years, I have heard some heartbreaking stories of mistreatment from friends, classmates, team members, neighbors, and yes, fellow Hilldrup employees, simply because of the color of their skin.

We all must be more empathetic to those who are different than we are. We must do our part to protect and to ensure that all are treated fairly and with dignity. To quote Martin Luther King Jr., "You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step." Let this be a call to action for us all to actively pursue the fair and just treatment of Black lives; to not turn a blind eye to bad behavior; to speak up and take action when we witness it. We will be better people, a better company, a better community and a better world for it.

At Hilldrup, our values speak to our commitment to equality, diversity and the fair treatment of all. Unwavering Commitment, Empowered Accountability, Fearless Communication, Uncompromised Integrity, Infectious Positivity and Purposeful Agility are all paramount to our organizational approach to the equitable treatment of applicants, vendors, clients and our employees and contractors. However, I continue to ask myself, "Is there more we should be doing?"

To start answering this question, Remus will be leading a series of Teams meetings with groups from across the organization and from all departments and branches to simply listen: what can we learn, what are we not aware of and where we can improve? We don't know all the answers and actions moving forward, but we are committed to doing the very best job we can to make this the company everyone can be proud of. We will share with you the findings from these virtual meetings which will be taking place within the next two weeks.

Finally, I want to leave you with a few thoughts:

- "Protests are the voice of the unheard." *Martin Luther King, Jr.*
- Rioting and looting distract from the message of the protest.
- The phrase "Black Lives Matter" does not negate any other lives. It simply means that value should be placed on Black and Brown lives as value is placed on other lives.

I hope that we all can agree on these three points.

Please be well and pray for peaceful change as we listen to and learn from one another and take meaningful action.

Charles

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