How to be an Ally

Stories from the Hedge Fund Industry
Acknowledgements

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- Melody Rollins, Client Advisor, Bridgewater Associates
- Michelle Danso, Global Head Prime Brokerage and Trading Legal, Man Group
- Oliver Stern, General Counsel APAC and Head of Compliance Asia, Man Group
- Rosellen Bounds, Director, ACA Compliance Group
- Scott Treloar, Chief Investment Officer, Noviscient
- Serena Tiong, Chief Risk Officer, Noviscient
- Melody Rollins, Client Advisor, Bridgewater Associates
- Michelle Danso, Global Head Prime Brokerage and Trading Legal, Man Group
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In 2020, AIMA published the first paper on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our 30-year history. Our reasons for doing so were simple: our industry needed it, and our industry asked for it. It was needed because we now compete harder for talent than ever before, and investors are taking more interest in our industry DEI practices by the day. It was asked for simply because members of our industry care deeply about DEI, and we know that by working together, we can achieve positive change far more quickly.

The result was The Alternatives, a paper outlining 45 different actions hedge fund managers of all sizes can take to improve their DEI practices.

No sooner had the ink dried on that paper though, than we realised we needed to do more. In conversations with industry stakeholders, led by the AIMA DEI Steering Group, it quickly became clear that we were missing something important. While The Alternatives contained reams of possible actions that a firm could take, how could their people take individual action to help? What could a member of the industry who did not sit on any executive committees, who could not dictate firm policy, do to promote DEI?

A great deal, it turns out.

In fact, the people who come to work every day in the industry are the essential element to the success of DEI. Cultural shifts cannot be dictated from above: they have to come from the grassroots. For DEI to succeed it has to be embedded in the culture of our industry at every level, from the reception desk to the executive office.

Enter the concept of allyship. You will read many interpretations of allyship in this paper, but perhaps the simplest explanation is the best: allyship means supporting your colleagues, no matter who they might be. It means listening to them, understanding them, and supporting them. It means taking the time to educate yourself about the issues they face. Most important of all, it means persisting until the changes you want to see become a reality.

Allyship cannot be created in the boardroom. It cannot be conjured by human resources policies or summoned into being by industry bodies. Allyship can only be created by your actions. So, when you read this paper, read it as a call to action, knowing that your actions will determine the future of our industry.

Jack Inglis
Chief Executive Officer, AIMA

Robyn Grew
Chair, AIMA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Group;
Vice Chair, AIMA Council; Group COO and General Counsel, Man Group

“And many strokes, though with a little axe, hew down and fell the hardest-timbered oak.”
William Shakespeare, *King Henry VI Part III*
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"Allyship requires action," says Carol Ward. The President of Man GLG is speaking from personal experience. She grew up with two gay brothers. Carol had to learn how to be an ally early.

Her biggest role, she says, was simply supporting her brothers: being a shoulder to lean on, and a sympathetic ear. Along with her siblings, she also worked to make her parents comfortable with the situation, acting as a bridge between her brothers and her parents.

Carol and her family didn't know it at the time, but attitudes towards same-sex couples were shifting in their country. Thanks to the tireless work of LGBTQ+ activists in Ireland, and the quiet support of allies like Carol, old prejudices were losing their hold. This process culminated in 2015. Through a simple act of solidarity—ticking a box on a piece of paper—hundreds of thousands of Irish changed the lives of their fellow citizens.

Ireland became the first country in the world to legalise same-sex marriage through a popular referendum.

Don't underestimate the power of allyship. Carol has taken the allyship lessons she has learned through her life experiences and applied them to the workplace. Her goal is to make sure that everyone can be themselves in the workplace and, to that end, she has become one of Man Group's most prominent LGBTQ+ allies. She's quick to say that there's no silver bullet for allyship. Rather, Man Group has pursued a slew of actions, both small and large. Executive allies, including Carol, have spoken about their experiences. Man Group has launched an initiative in which anyone who wants to can put a small Pride flag on their desk, to show their support for their colleagues; gender neutral bathrooms were also introduced in the London office.

Of course, there's still much to do. By Carol's own admission, some events have still been sparsely attended; Covid has created its own problems, as members of the LGBTQ+ community may not be out to their families, with whom they may have had to shelter.

Nevertheless, if Carol has learned anything from her experiences, just being there for people matters. It may not seem like much, but the first stage in allyship is sometimes just being willing to listen to your colleagues, and to let them know you're there to help if they need it.

After all, if Carol's story tells us anything, it's that small actions can sometimes be the start of something revolutionary.

• Let your colleagues know they can talk to you.
• Listen to your colleagues, and ask them how you can help before suggesting solutions.
• Take actions—no matter how small—to make your colleagues feel comfortable and accepted.

In the face of all this, people naturally want to take action. Faced with systemic injustices, members of our industry have asked AIMA what they can do. Many of those people were not in management positions, and most of them were not members of minority or disadvantaged groups. They wanted to know what they could do to help their colleagues, even if they could not directly shape firm policy. More to the point, they wanted to know how they could help without seeming insensitive, or as if they were acting out of misplaced charity.

They wanted, in short, to know how to be good allies.

In conversations with members of our industry around the world, it became clear that being a good ally means doing four things: listening, supporting, educating, and persisting.

The need to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the alternative investment management industry has never been clearer. In this our industry is not alone. 2020 saw protests over Indigenous rights temporarily shut down swathes of a G7 country's transportation network. It saw global protests sparked by the mistreatment of African Americans at the hands of police. Those protests, in turn, sparked debates about historical monuments from Baton Rouge to Brussels. The ongoing pandemic, meanwhile, has thrown light on existing divisions. Questions are being asked about why some minority groups suffer disproportionately from the virus, why essential workers beatified as ‘heroes’ needed to use the food bank while they were still alive, and why women continue to shoulder the bulk of housework and child-raising.

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Toronto is a long way from Bogotá, in more ways than one. When Laura Garzon decided to stay in the city after graduating from university, and to start her career on Bay Street, she knew that she would face some challenges. In a way, however, she was lucky. Toronto is the most international city in the world; roughly one in every two Torontonians was born abroad. Wait for a streetcar in the Toronto winter and there’s a good chance that the person waiting next to you can remember living in a country with better weather.

Laura, by her own account, never experienced much more than microaggressions: being complimented on her lack of accent, for instance. She was also lucky in that she had colleagues who were willing to mentor her, and to expose her to Canadian culture. Senior staff and company leadership made a point of providing her with opportunities and bringing her to events that she might otherwise not have attended, as a junior member of staff.

Today, Laura is paying it forward. Now an associate at CIBC Capital Markets, she still believes that mentorship, and relationships in general, is one of the most effective means of being an ally. To her, allyship isn’t something others usually give or receive recognition for. You can find it in small actions in everyday encounters, like echoing someone else’s point in a meeting after they’ve been spoken over. While she was a member of the CIBC’s Junior Advisory Council, she stressed the need to give juniors an opportunity to get involved in relationship building with clients and leadership. Simply being willing to talk to people, or to bring them to events and meetings, can make a profound difference. Being an ally—or, more accurately, an advocate—is a daily activity.

Laura hasn’t forgotten her own experiences outside of work, either. She still takes the time to help international students trying to break into the Toronto financial scene, grappling with jobs and immigration applications at the same time. After all, she’s been there.

Jeff Ray’s office at Mackenzie Investments is a short ten-minute walk from Bay Street. The Vice President, Product Development knows at thing or two about mentorship. When Mackenzie Investments decided to focus on diversity and inclusion they knew, as Jeff says, that it would “come down to the grassroots.” Mentorship would be a crucial pillar of that grassroots approach.

The first step was to pair mentors and mentees. This was not, however, completely straightforward. As Jeff notes, some people might be uncomfortable asking for mentorship to begin with. That means that would-be mentors needed to be proactive, offering to support junior members of staff even if they hadn’t asked to be mentored.

Once the mentorship relationships have been established, the first step is, as with all instances of being an ally, to listen. Learning about someone’s background, and their aspirations, is crucial to being an effective ally. That also means, as Jeff notes, being there to listen and support them when they go through challenges in their personal lives. The end goal is to support mentees in achieving their career goals.

This can mean giving advice, but it can also mean promoting their work internally. Jeff, for instance, promoted one of his mentee’s projects internally, which gave her the opportunity to present to senior members of staff, giving the mentee and her work visibility to senior leadership.

Being an ally can often mean taking the first step.

- Ask your colleagues if you can help them.
- Ensure that your colleagues are invited to meetings and events, and that they have an opportunity to speak.
- Leverage your resources to support your colleagues, so they can be judged on their work.

For too long, entering alternative investment management as a Black person has meant being an ‘only.’ The only one at the table, the only one in the client meeting—the list goes on.

The research on what being an ‘only’ means for professional satisfaction and advancement is stark. ‘Onlys’ are more likely to experience feelings of being under intense scrutiny and feel that their personal actions positively or negatively reflect upon the whole racial or ethnic group with which they identify. As Melody Rollins, client advisor at Bridgewater Associates, explains based on experiences over her career, one of the trickiest things about being an ‘only’ is the lack of shared experience.

“Everyone needs people who can either relate to their lived experiences or otherwise understand certain aspects of their identity. When there are people around you who share a background or are otherwise informed about it, then the pressure of being the sole representative is relieved. You’re seen for who you are and not how different you are. That’s allyship—seeing someone for who they are and recognizing how their identity has and continues to inform their reality.”

Melody is an industry veteran: after graduating from Georgetown University and MIT’s Sloan School of Management, she spent 14 years at PIMCO, where she ran Institutional Client Service for the Americas. At Bridgewater, Melody oversees client relationships with core US, Canadian, and European institutional investors, and is particularly focused on developing content and tools on new digital platforms. If her years in the industry have taught her anything about diversity, equity, and inclusion, it’s that there are no easy answers. “Sometimes people want the ‘quick fix’ to solve the problem, and it just doesn’t exist,” says Melody. “The problem and opportunity is so complex—we are talking about industry norms that have been entrenched for decades. But that’s not a reason not to do something, it’s a reason to get more determined, more creative, more focused.”

As the head of Bridgewater’s Black Network (BBN), alongside her full-time job, Melody and her partners on the firm’s D&I team constantly grapple with the right formula for progress. She is quick to acknowledge that neither she nor Bridgewater has all the answers, but that they have learned a lot. Their current approach, set by Co-Director David McCormick and Chief Diversity Officer Alan Bowser in partnership with many others, combines a focus on systemic, structural change, action-oriented education, and inclusion strategies centred on teams.

“On the structural side, we as a firm are very focused on increasing representation over the long-term, but the reality is that it takes time. Inclusion is the thing we can move the needle on today, often boosting our representation goals in the process,” Melody explains.

Only ten years ago, education on these subjects would have been covered in HR training, if it was covered at all. Now Bridgewater is getting creative, leveraging its culture to change existing paradigms on inclusion, understanding, and experience-sharing in order to make progress and to try to affect lasting change. For example, in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the protests against racial injustice, the firm’s Black Network wanted to build on the track record of impact it had established to produce opportunities for further education and action.

But as Melody explains, she and the other leaders of the BBN were focused on ensuring the burden of education didn’t fall on the firm’s Black employees. So she started reaching out to others around the firm to brainstorm. What she found was that few people knew exactly what to do, but that everyone was willing to roll up their sleeves and help.

Members of the firm’s investment research team volunteered to put together a detailed, data-backed
That’s an ally.”

it easier for someone else to belong and contribute.

Bridgewater and Head of D&I. “If Melody is in the space, you inhabit,” says Caitlin Ludlow, a senior manager at

about showing up – physically, but also in terms of

for allyship. “At the end of the day, I think allyship is

particular event’s success, but is also herself a model

that Melody was not only the driving force behind this

issues of race in America. Employees then split up into

breakout groups to discuss what they had heard and to

identify actions they could take both at Bridgewater and in

their communities.

According to Melody, the collaboration and engagement

around that event are good examples of allyship in

action, a thread that is ongoing through similar

programs with Bridgewater’s other affinity networks.

Working alongside the Black Network, attending the

presentation, giving voice to hard things, and then

following through on specific actions for change all

define what it means to be an ally in the workplace.

While she won’t say as much, her colleagues confirm

that Melody was not only the driving force behind this

particular event’s success, but is also herself a model

for allyship. “At the end of the day, I think allyship is

about showing up – physically, but also in terms of

taking responsibility for the spaces and environments

you inhabit,” says Caitlin Ludlow, a senior manager at

Bridgewater and Head of D&I. “If Melody is in the space,

I know she’s understanding and acting on how to make it

easier for someone else to belong and contribute. That’s an ally.”

* Take the initiative to educate yourself about the issues your colleagues may be facing.
* Contribute to educational initiatives at your firm.
* Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Gemma Hagen, Director of Technology at Aspect Capital, knows something about persisting. Growing up in a home reliant on government support, as a child Gemma thought the ultimate sign of success was being able to buy yourself a small bottle of Coke.

Despite the challenges she faced, Gemma ended up graduating from the UK’s elite Imperial College, before making her way into the hedge fund industry. That doesn’t mean, however, that she no longer faces challenges. Quite the opposite, in fact. As Gemma says, the “pressure continues to grow as you become more responsible.” Gemma has had to adjust her professional schedule around the need to support her family.

Throughout it all, however, Aspect Capital has been willing to help. Her colleagues have listened to her problems, and managers offered flexible hours and remote working so that she could be with her family. They even went so far as to ensure that she had enough
downtime.

As Gemma says, all these things have made her an even more dedicated member of the Aspect staff: the consistent support has fostered a sense of solidarity.

She is also keen to do her part and has taken it upon herself to promote the hiring and inclusion of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Having a different background from your colleagues tends to give you some perspective. She believes that the ability to sustain social mobility lies in accepting that

an individual’s circumstances persist long after they have been “socially mobilised”, and that if employers are truly committed to fostering diversity, they must also be willing to show compassion, to be flexible, and to be respectful of the circumstances of their employees.

Before moving from Germany to Hong Kong, Daniel Lehmann didn’t think there was any need for him to “come out” as an LGBTQ+ ally. The Head of Business Management Technology, Operations & Products at Allianz Global Investors soon learned, however, that certain things he had taken for granted in Germany were much more controversial in Hong Kong.

While there are developments towards more openness,
in general attitudes towards LGBTQ+ issues are still conservative in Hong Kong. This presented Daniel with a question. On the one hand, he wasn’t blind to the sensibilities that might be raised by a foreigner coming to Hong Kong and advocating European values and beliefs. As he puts it, “who am I to come here and tell them what is right or wrong?” On the other hand, however, he felt he had a responsibility to make a difference towards acceptance and inclusiveness. The role of management, he says, is to send a signal.

In the end, it wasn’t a hard decision. Daniel is heavily involved in AllianzGI’s diversity and inclusion work globally and in Asia, and he was recently named a Top 100 Executive Ally by LGBT Great. He is chairing the AllianzGI Pride Network group which sponsored work around education on LGBTQ+ issues, written tips on how to be an ally, and organised events for Pride Month and Coming Out Day globally.

Sometimes there were difficult decisions to be had, but as Daniel says, “if you don’t need to make a trade-off it’s easy to be a supporter.” While there is still a long way to go for LGBTQ+ topics, Daniel is still motivated. “I want to look in the mirror and see someone who made a difference,” he says, “and if the work we are doing, as a team changes only one life for the better, it was already
worth it.”

* Remember that allyship is a marathon, and not a sprint; don’t burn yourself out.
* Don’t be afraid to push for things you believe, even if it can cause uncomfortable conversations.
* Recognise that it will take time for your actions to bear fruit.
Recommendations

**LISTEN**
- Let your colleagues know they can talk to you.
- Listen to your colleagues, and ask them how you can help before suggesting solutions.
- Take actions—no matter how small—to make your colleagues feel comfortable and accepted.

**SUPPORT**
- Ask your colleagues if you can help them.
- Ensure that your colleagues are invited to meetings and events, and that they have an opportunity to speak.
- Leverage your resources to support your colleagues, so they can be judged on their work.

**EDUCATE**
- Take the initiative to educate yourself about the issues your colleagues may be facing.
- Contribute to educational initiatives at your firm.
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

**PERSIST**
- Remember that allyship is a marathon, and not a sprint: don’t burn yourself out.
- Don’t be afraid to push for things you believe, even if it can cause uncomfortable conversations.
- Recognise that it will take time for your actions to bear fruit.

Additional Resources

**General**
- **Lean In**
  https://leanin.org/50-ways-to-fight-gender-bias
- **How To Challenge Ourselves to Grow As Allies**
  https://coreytponder.medium.com/how-to-challenge-ourselves-to-grow-as-allies-28a3025a0f14
- **Small Actions, Big Impact: How to Be an Ally at Work and Why It Matters**
- **Sharing the weight: How to Know When—and How—to Support Marginalized People at Work**
- **Workplace Allies Serve as Ambassadors for Change**
- **Tips for Serving as an Ally**
- **Be a Better Ally**
  https://hbr.org/2020/11/be-a-better-ally
- **Guide to Allyship**
  https://guidetooallyship.com/
- **Ally Skills Workshop**
- **The Hardest Part of Being an Ally**
  https://behavioralscientist.org/the-hardest-part-of-being-an-ally/
- **Allyship 101: Listening, Learning, and Loving Others in the Age of Black Lives Matter**
  https://civilrights.org/podcast/s03-e08/
- **SEI: The Intersection**
  https://seic.com/intersection
- **Leading With Empathy & Allyship Show**
  https://changecatalyst.co/allyshipseries/

**Gender**
- **Women in the Workplace**
- **Good guys: How men can be allies to women at work**
  https://www.reuters.com/article/us-world-work-goodguys/good-guys-how-men-can-be-allies-to-women-at-work-idUSKBN8XN27X10
- **6 Ways That Women Can Champion Each Other At Work**
  https://leanin.org/tips/workplace-ally
- **7 Tips for Men Who Want to Support Equality**
  https://leanin.org/together/men
- **Creating Inclusive Workplaces**
  https://www.stonewall.org.uk/power-inclusive-workplaces

**Race**
- **What Black Employee Resource Groups Need Right Now**
  https://hbr.org/2020/06/what-black-employee-resource-groups-need-right-now/ab/checklists/1
- **How to be an Ally Stories from the Hedge Fund Industry**
• Viewpoint: How to Be a Better Ally to Your Black Colleagues

• 3 Ways to Be a Better LGBTQ Ally in the Office
https://www.themuse.com/advice/3-ways-to-be-a-better-lgbtq-ally-in-the-office

• 4 Ways To Make Your Workplace Equitable For Trans People
https://www.npr.org/2020/06/02/867780563/4-ways-to-make-your-workplace-equitable-for-trans-people

• How To Be An LGBTQ Ally At Work
https://www.forbes.com/sites/brianchongiman/2016/07/20/lgbtq-ally-at-work/?sh=1584a448042c

• Here’s What a Good LGBTQ Ally Looks Like
https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/6/22/18700875/lgbtq-good-ally

• Radical Empathy and Active Allyship

• Out & Proud - Celebrating Pride Month
https://civilrights.org/podcast/episode-5-out-proud-celebrating-pride-month/

• GLAAD
https://www.glaad.org/resources

• Human Rights Campaign
https://www.hrc.org/resources/workplace

• Human Rights Campaign Foundation - Trans Toolkit for Employers
https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/trans-toolkit-for-employers?_ga=2.88442587.1760585533.1619554301-286415648.1619554301

• LGBT National Help Center
http://www.gblnationalhelpcenter.org/

• The Trevor Project
https://www.thetrevorproject.org/tvnr_support_center/mental-health/

• MIND – LGBTQ+ Mental Health

• Community Mental Health Action Plan - Workplace Wellness
https://mentalhealthactionplan.ca/tools-resources/training/mental-health-training-framework/workplace-wellness/

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• MIND – LGBTQ+ Mental Health
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/lgbtq-plus-mental-health/supporting-someone-who-is-lgbtqplus/

• FFLAG
https://www.fflag.org.uk/

• Trans Lifeline
https://translifeline.org/resources/

General
• US Department of Health & Human Services – Mental Health
https://www.mentalhealth.gov/

• MIND – Work and Mental Health
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/how-to-be-mentally-healthy-at-work/work-and-mental-health/

• Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Mental Health in the Workplace

• Mental Health Foundation - How to support mental health at work
https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/how-support-mental-health-work

• Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development - Supporting mental health at work
https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/culture/well-being/mental-health-support/report

• Community Mental Health Action Plan - Workplace Wellness
https://mentalhealthactionplan.ca/tools-resources/training/mental-health-training-framework/workplace-wellness/

• Human Rights Campaign Foundation - Trans Toolkit for Employers
https://www.thehrcfoundation.org/professional-resources/trans-toolkit-for-employers?_ga=2.88442587.1760585533.1619554301-286415648.1619554301

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Mental Health Resources

• Mental Health America
https://www.mhanational.org/issues/lgbtq-communities-and-mental-health

• National Alliance on Mental Illness

• Human Rights Campaign - QTBIPOC Mental Health and Wellbeing
https://www.hrc.org/resources/qtbipec-mental-health-and-wellbeing

• South Asian Public Health Association - LGBTQIA+ Resources
http://joinaspha.org/community-guide/lgbtqia+-resources/

• National Alliance on Mental Illness


• Verywell Mind – Mental Health Resources for Immigrants
https://www.verywellmind.com/mental-health-resources-for-people-who-immigrated-to-the-united-states-5079531

• Mental Health America
https://www.mhanational.org/issues/lgbtq-communities-and-mental-health

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http://joinaspha.org/community-guide/lgbtqia+-resources/

• National Alliance on Mental Illness


• The Mental Health Coalition - BIPOC Mental Health Resources

• Melanin and Mental Health
  https://www.melaninandmentalhealth.com/resources/

• Verywell Mind - Mental Health Resources for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders
  https://www.verywellmind.com/mental-health-resources-for-asian-pacific-islander-communities-5116843

About AIMA

The Alternative Investment Management Association (AIMA) is the global representative of the alternative investment industry, with around 2,000 corporate members in over 60 countries. AIMA's fund manager members collectively manage more than $2 trillion in hedge fund and private credit assets. AIMA draws upon the expertise and diversity of its membership to provide leadership in industry initiatives such as advocacy, policy and regulatory engagement, educational programmes and sound practice guides. AIMA works to raise media and public awareness of the value of the industry. AIMA set up the Alternative Credit Council (ACC) to help firms focused in the private credit and direct lending space. AIMA is committed to developing skills and education standards and is a co-founder of the Chartered Alternative Investment Analyst designation (CAIA) – the first and only specialised educational standard for alternative investment specialists. AIMA is governed by its Council (Board of Directors).

For further information, please visit AIMA's website, www.aima.org