Q: What is The Everest Project, Part 2?

A: The Everest Project, Part 2 is a continuation of ELC’s and the Institute’s research focus on leadership and Black women executives. The Everest Project will uncover the challenges and facilitators for women leading change and innovation.

Q: Why are ELC and the Institute focusing on leading change and innovation?

A: In ELC’s 2008 groundbreaking study, The Black Women Executives Research Initiative, ‘change agency’ was identified as a leadership skill and ability that seemed to propel Black women executives into the C-Suite. The Everest Project, Part 2 will tell us how the most senior and successful women executives put change agency to work in leading their teams and organizations.

The necessity for executives to be change agents often centers on leading organizations during times of crisis. Increasingly, however, change agency is focused on leading innovation, as companies need to grow and remain competitive through innovation—to create new businesses, new products, new processes—and to profit from them. The hypothesis of The Everest Project is: Executives who can effectively lead their organizations through change and innovation will have the greatest chance of reaching the C-Suite.

Q: Who will benefit from the research findings?

A: The research is designed to provide ELC and the Institute with actionable data to design highly targeted leadership training and coaching programs for ELC members and member companies. Working together, the Institute and the Everest research team will:

- Identify the chutes and ladders women face as a group and within their respective affinity groups, in their critical role as leaders of change and innovation;
- Benchmark what successful women leaders are doing and identify how Black women executives can incorporate these approaches in their own development; and
- Translate the research findings into practical and actionable steps that Black women executives and their companies can take for sustainable change.
Q: Who will participate in the research?

A: The Everest research team will interview 30 senior level leaders from each of the following affinity groups – Black, Hispanic, LGBTQ, Pan-Asian and White women – at Fortune 500 corporations across the country. A total 150 senior level women executives will be interviewed.

Q: How will researchers insure that self-reporting by senior-level women interviewees will result in an unbiased data set?

A: The Everest research team will ask each interviewee to identify a manager, or senior colleague, as well as, a direct report, or team member, to be interviewed. The result is that each senior level woman interviewee will be part of an Interview Triad, including her manager or colleague and a director report or team member, which will provide a more complete picture of leadership facilitators and challengers. All interviews will be confidential, one-on-one conversations by phone or in person. Accordingly, there will be 150 Interview Triads totaling 450 unique interviews. This interview approach was first tested in The Black Women Executives Research Initiative where we interviewed Black woman executives and a senior colleague of each.

A broader survey of 500 – 750 senior and mid-level women manager triads will expand the research scope to include aspiring leaders.

Q: What are the criteria for selecting women to participate in The Everest Project?

A: The senior-level interviewees will come from a cross section of predominantly Fortune 500 companies that together will generally reflect the S&P 500 in terms of industry, sector and geographic concentration. Senior-level women will be selected based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Within 1 to 3 levels of the CEO or within 1 level of a Division President
- A CEO or Division President
- Significant P&L
- Key functional role with significant people leadership responsibility
- Current or former position can lead to selection as CEO or Division President

Q: How can companies get involved in the research and get access to the research findings?

A: Time Warner and Bank of America are among The Everest Project’s lead corporate sponsors. Please let us know if your company would also be interested in supporting this groundbreaking initiative as a corporate sponsor. Sponsoring companies will have an opportunity to include more women in the
research (interviews and surveys) and view more detailed final reports including more in-depth recommendations and interventions.

Q: What is the timetable for selecting senior women interviewees, conducting the interviews and completing the research?


Q: Who is conducting the research and interviews, and who are the other Research Partners?

A: The Everest Project brings together a diverse team of researchers with corporate and/or scholarly backgrounds lead by Pamela Carlton, JD, MBA and Lily Tang, PhD, MBA. ELC and the Institute are partnering with leading affinity organizations, Ascend, Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility, Out Leadership and consulting firm, Springboard – Partners in Cross Cultural Leadership to undertake this seminal research initiative.

Ascend, the largest U.S. organization for Pan Asian professionals, is committed to building an inclusive business leadership pipeline and empowering Pan Asian corporate leaders to make significant and impactful contributions in the global marketplace and their communities.

Hispanic Association for Corporate Responsibility (HACR), comprised of the most influential grassroots advocacy groups and national associations in the U.S. and Puerto Rico concerning Hispanics, has the goal to support the advancement and inclusion of Hispanics in Corporate America.

Out Leadership develops innovative and forward-thinking initiatives to leverage LGBT opportunities across a range of industries. Designed to engage senior and emerging leaders and leverage the collective power of corporate partners. Out Leadership’s global initiatives impact business results, develop talent and drive equality forward.

Springboard – Partners in Cross Cultural Leadership, an executive and organizational leadership consulting firm, was founded in 2003 to address one of the most critical issues facing our world today, inclusive leadership – leading effectively across highly diverse and global teams, organizations and customer bases. Engagements include organizational consulting, executive coaching, assessments and research.