

POLICY WATCH – February 2023

In This Issue

- Nominate a Leader of the North Bay – Deadline is March 17th!
- Celebrating Black History Month
- Workforce shortage, Skills Mismatch, New Jobs Creation and Layoffs: What Does this Mean?!
- Look Beyond the U.S. to Global Markets: Two Easy Ways to Increase Your Sales
- Members in the News



Mahatma Gandhi said, "Where there is love there is life." In February, we celebrate Valentine's Day, but we hope that our love extends to all of humanity. As we mark the one-year anniversary of the war in Ukraine, our hearts break for the Ukrainians as they are forced to fight to protect their democracy. As we celebrate Black History Month, our hearts break for the increase in racism and attempts to deny the black history that shaped our country by states like Florida. And while there are more heart-breaking occurrences, we hold on to the love we must give us life to stand up for what is right and true for the betterment of our world.

In this issue, we urge you to consider nominating a person, organization or team for a Leader of the North Bay awards. Please see below for more details and note that March 17th is the deadline for submittals. And we also look at workforce trends as we continue to face a workforce shortage in these uncertain economic times.

Best,

Cynthia Murray
Cynthia

Nominate a Leader of the North Bay – Give Recognition to Your Unsung Hero or Organization!



2023 LEADERS OF THE NORTH BAY

Call for Nominations of an Outstanding Leader or Organization

North Bay Leadership Council will honor outstanding organizations, individuals and teams or partnerships for their leadership in contributing to the prosperity and quality of life in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa Counties.

**Deadline:
March 17, 2023**

Nomination Form can
be found at:

www.northbayleadership.org
or email
info@northbayleadership.org

SAVE THE DATE:
**2023 LEADERS OF THE NORTH
BAY AWARDS LUNCHEON**
Friday, May 12, 2023
DoubleTree Hotel, Rohnert Park

Categories:

United We Stand

Community Building:
Recognition of leadership in corporate philanthropy or volunteerism, civic engagement and community impact.
2022 Honoree: Keith Woods, Exchange Bank

Paint the Community Green

Environmental Stewardship:
Recognition of leadership in green business, green building and/or environmental stewardship.
2022 Honoree: The Climate Center

The “Light Bulb” Went On

Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit:
Recognition of creativity, innovation and the entrepreneurial spirit.
2022 Honoree: Steve Dutton, Dutton Ranch

Empowering the Latinx Community

Leadership in the Latinx Community:
Recognition of efforts to empower and strengthen the Latinx community through education, job training, cultural awareness, and business development resources.
2022 Honoree: Canal WiFi Alliance

From Red Tape to Red Carpet

Leadership in Government:
Recognition of local governments that cut through red tape, eliminate barriers to economic growth, enhance efficiency of service, and improve the business climate through innovation and best practices.
2022 Honoree: Dr. David Wain Coon, College of Marin

For More Information Visit: www.northbayleadership.org

Celebrating Black History Month

Writing for NPR/KQED, Scott Neuman's article, [It's Black History Month - Here are 3 things to know about the annual celebration](#) (Link) provides good context on why February is the chosen month to celebrate Black History and why that is more important than ever. Neuman says, "In 1926, [Carter G. Woodson](#), the scholar often referred to as the 'father of Black history,' established Negro History Week to focus attention on Black contributions to civilization.

According to the NAACP, Woodson — at the time only the second Black American after W.E.B. Du Bois to earn a doctorate from Harvard University — 'fervently believed that Black people should be proud of their heritage and [that] all Americans should understand the largely overlooked achievements of Black Americans.'"

Neuman says, "Woodson, the son of former enslaved people, famously said: If a race has no history, if it has no worthwhile tradition, it becomes a negligible factor in the thought of the world, and it stands in danger of being exterminated.' Woodson chose a week in February because of Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday was Feb. 12, and Frederick Douglass, who was born enslaved and did not know his actual birth date, but chose to celebrate it on Feb. 14."

The author says, "'Those two people were central to helping to afford Black people the experience of freedom that they have now,' says W. Marvin Dulaney, president of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History ([ASALH](#)), which Woodson founded in 1915 and today is the official promoter of Black History Month."

"In the decades after the Civil War and through the racial violence that erupted across the country in the years following World War I," says Neuman, "there was a concerted effort to repress the teaching of Black history. 'In the South, they tried to suppress Black history or African American history in the public schools,' Dulaney says, 'particularly about things like Reconstruction and slavery, literally distorting the curriculum. At the university level, Black studies programs were almost nonexistent. California was the first state to actually mandate Black history in 1951 for the public schools.'"

LaGarrett King, an associate professor of social studies education at the University at Buffalo says, "Largely as a result of the civil rights and Black consciousness movements of the 1960s, you saw an uptick in Black history courses." Across the country, public schools "created all these courses and mandates for Black history," unofficially creating a Black History Month."

The Black press also helped push the idea, says Marcus Hunter, a sociology professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. "*The Chicago Defender*, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *Baltimore Afro-American* ... they all started to say that this is something we're celebrating," Hunter says.

Neuman says, "By 1976, it became official, with President Gerald R. Ford declaring February as Black History Month and calling on the public to 'seize the opportunity to honor the too-often

neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.”

Each year a new theme is chosen for Black History month. The theme this year is Black Resistance. Neuman says, “African Americans have resisted historic and ongoing oppression, in all forms, especially the racial terrorism of lynching, racial pogroms, and police killings since our arrival upon these shores,” the ASALH says of [this year's theme](#). “These efforts have been to advocate for a dignified self-determined life in a just democratic society in the United States and beyond the United States political jurisdiction.”

Neuman reports, “Dulaney says this year's theme was chosen, in part, because of the current politically charged environment around race. He calls efforts in states like [Florida](#), which recently rejected a new Advanced Placement course covering African American studies, and [Alabama](#), where the State Board of Education has voted to limit how educators can talk about race in the classroom, ‘a strong retrenchment’ against coming to terms with Black history. In light of that, the theme seemed appropriate this year,” Dulaney says.

“King acknowledges that some people might interpret this year's theme as politically provocative, but it shouldn't be seen that way,” says Neuman. “Rather, it's an effort to reframe the conversation about Black history around a theme of empowerment,” he says.

“With resistance there is an implied understanding of oppression, and it seems to be a segment of the population who do not want to admit those historical facts,” Dulaney says. “Yet, resistance helps us understand the power that Black people have in terms of their historical realities, which counters the concept of victimhood that many say drives Black History education.”

Neuman shares that Dulaney sees, “the culture wars playing out across the country over how students learn about race feel like a case of history repeating itself. For many, recent events — the police killings of [Breonna Taylor](#) and George Floyd, for example, and the ongoing controversy surrounding critical race theory, an academic framework stating that people who are white have benefited from ingrained racism in American institutions — look like a recurring pattern”

“I grew up in Ohio and we didn't learn about a single African or African American man or woman who had ever done anything in history,” the 72-year-old Dulaney says. “Starting in the '60s, through the '70s, we were very successful in integrating African American history of culture into the curriculum,” he says. However, “now here we are back, having to push that agenda again ... [against those] trying to suppress the teaching of African American history and culture.”

King thinks the current controversy surrounding critical race theory will die down. “My personal feelings are that they'll find another politically manufactured outrage and move on to the next thing,” he says.

In closing, Neuman says, “UCLA's Hunter thinks that debate is indicative of where the country is right now. What it really says is ‘there's a lot of work to still be done.’ However, Black History

Month has been and can continue to be a force for better understanding. 'It offers a certain amount of optimism about what is possible if people actually focus on the educational importance of it,'" says Hunter.

Chuck Shelton says in [6 Ways to Celebrate Black History Month and Be a Better Ally in the Workforce Beyond February](#) (Entrepreneur, [Link](#)) that we should aspire to celebrating DEI all year long. He says, "Research shows that workplace diversity positively impacts employee engagement and productivity. In other words, creating an environment of inclusivity for all employees isn't just the right thing to do, but it also makes good business sense. An authentic celebration of Black heritage throughout the year can help companies foster understanding and empathy among coworkers from different backgrounds. Such a celebration also allows employees to learn more about their colleagues' experiences, promoting a deeper sense of community and understanding."

By recognizing Black history all year long, companies can show their employees they care while demonstrating a commitment to creating an environment where everyone feels seen, heard, valued and respected. Celebrating Black culture is one way to ensure all employees feel included in the workplace, no matter what month it is. Shelton offers six ways to be a better ally and celebrate Black History Month beyond February. Here a few of them:

1. Celebrate authentic Black history and culture
Make sure that all employees have access to accurate and current information about the African-American experience and contributions throughout history. Encourage employees to learn more about the accomplishments of African Americans in a variety of fields — from science and engineering to art, music and literature.
 - How to implement it: Provide employees with a list of books, movies and articles by African Americans that tell the stories of African Americans throughout history. As opposed to non-African Americans telling the stories about African Americans (which has been the norm for too long).
2. Show authentic support
Show employees that their contributions are seen and valued by celebrating their success throughout the year. From recognition awards to career advancement opportunities, ensure you're actively engaging with all of your employees so they know their work is appreciated.
 - How to implement it: Highlight employee achievements in company newsletters and recognize them at team meetings. These small gestures can go a long way in making your workplace more inclusive for everyone!
3. Incorporate inclusive resources into training
Include inclusive language, images, historical facts, etc., into all existing workplace diversity curriculums and training materials. Such a universal approach will help employees become more aware of the impact that race, gender and ethnicity have on daily workplace interactions.
 - How to implement it: Incorporate examples from Black history into existing diversity training materials such as videos, readings, and case studies. Ask employees for feedback

about which resources would be most useful for learning more about Black history and culture.

4. Develop authentic mentorship programs

Invest in mentorship programs focusing on developing collaborations between African American employees and their colleagues of other ethnic backgrounds. Establish safe spaces where everyone can share their experiences openly and without judgment.

- How to implement it: Create an inclusive environment through team-building exercises, cross-cultural conversations and networking events. Facilitate dialogue among employees of different backgrounds and encourage them to share their insights and ideas.

Workforce shortage, Skills Mismatch, New Jobs Creation and Layoffs: What Does this Mean?!

There is record unemployment and millions of new jobs being created. And yet, thousands of people are being laid off. But there are over 10 million job openings in the U.S. Hiring new employees is difficult in the North Bay (and beyond). Talk about mixed signals! What is going on in the workforce?

In [You might be jobless in 5 years, \(Link\)](#), we learn one aspect of understanding what is happening. There has been acceleration of companies changing their business practices and creating jobs requiring different skill sets than they previously sought. In Career Insights, Shatakshi Sharma, Co-CEO Global Governance Initiative, answers these questions based on the research done by BCG, LinkedIn and World Economic Forum: “Are you wondering if you should switch your job? Or do you question if you even have the right kind of skills for your job profile?”

- The relative importance of skills
The research talks about different skill groups. It showcases whether their importance is increasing, decreasing or remaining stable. Skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, self-management, working with people and tech and development see a growth in their importance. Whereas, on the other end of the spectrum, skills such as management and communication activities, core literacies and physical abilities are experiencing a relative decline in importance.
- Top 15 skills for 2025
The highest-ranked skills are analytical thinking and innovation, active learning and learning strategies, complex problem-solving, critical thinking and analysis. These skills test whether you are actively trying to learn and upskill yourself or are you happy to do an MBA and cease your growth henceforth. It also talks about your ability to bring structure in a messy situation and get a clear solution.

The next set of important skills are creativity, originality and initiative, leadership and social influence. It involves your ability to think out of the box and influence without having authority. Skills such as technology use, monitoring and control, technology design and programming help

you talk to product management or coders. It also involves using IOT, Cloud Computing and Artificial Intelligence to solve problems.

Certain character-based skills such as resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility and emotional intelligence also make the list. It emphasizes how EQ in addition to IQ is important.

Troubleshooting and user experience, service orientation, system analysis and evaluation are important to solve problems and improve customer service.

Last, but not least, we have persuasion and negotiation. This particular skill will not only help you excel in your career but also get you a good salary.

Besides sharpening skills to match employers' needs, there are other aspects to consider. In [Three shifts to expect in the hiring market in 2023](#), by Ty West ([Link](#)), he says, "One thing unlikely to change? The need for speed in the hiring process. Corey Berkey, senior vice president of people and talent at recruiting technology company Employ Inc., said signs continue to point to the labor market remaining tight this year, but with some improvements compared to 2022. Even with those improvements, experts say companies won't be able to revert to their pre-Covid hiring practices without increasing the risk of missing out on talent."

"I think that companies are going to evolve because they've learned a lesson, or they're going to get run over," Berkey said.

West says, "A recent survey by Employ found 77% of organizations have not reduced hiring plans or implemented a hiring freeze, and 8% anticipate making fewer hires in the next 12 months, with the bulk of companies planning to pull back concentrated in the technology, manufacturing and financial sectors — a trend that dovetails with recent layoffs. But the survey did find a 10.4% decrease in job openings between the second and third quarters of 2022, and an 8.7% increase in the number of job applicants."

Even with those shifts, Berkey anticipates the intense competition for talent will remain in a number of sectors, making it pivotal for recruiters to follow best practices. Here are some of the trends Berkey anticipates and how employers can respond:

"1. Employers will rethink hiring strategies

Since the Covid-19 recovery ramped up in early 2021, companies across a range of industries beefed up their payrolls. The result was a tight talent market, soaring salaries, elevated turnover and labor shortages in many sectors.

But as the economy has slowed, many companies are trimming positions and, in some cases, admitting they hired too many employees or increased salaries too much. Both 2022 and 2023 have been banner years for budgeted average raise amounts. While metrics show many companies plan robust hiring in 2023, Berkey said those efforts are likely to be more targeted.

'It's no longer going to be, 'Hey, this role has been vacated. Let's get that backfilled,' Berkey said. 'I think we're going to see businesses prioritize around roles that they know are going to drive that strategic value of the organization forward.' He said that trend will contribute to an increased focus on candidate quality for many businesses.

2. Hurdles at the offer stage

Employ's data found about 40% of offers are being accepted, echoing some of the obstacles recruiters have discussed with The Playbook. Pay expectations are a common sticking point, with the increasing number of counteroffers playing a role. Due in part to the high cost of replacing talent, recruiters say they are seeing a relatively high rate of counteroffers. 'I think a lot of Hail Mary, last-minute saves by the current employer are what's driving this number up,' Berkey said. The push for pay transparency is another factor — often affecting companies that aren't having the salary conversation early enough. In the absence of those discussions, candidates are doing their own research and making assumptions.

'I think a lot of candidates are getting to the finish line in the recruiting process and because the company hasn't openly had that conversation around compensation, the candidates are almost getting surprised by it,' Berkey said. 'They're often driven by what they see online, which online, you can find some crazy, crazy benchmarks that are completely inaccurate.'

He said candidates often hear stories about people who are changing jobs and getting a 40% raise. 'That's real. It's really happening, but it's not happening 100% of the time,' Berkey said. 'If you're holding out for that 40% increase, that's going to be few and far between.'

3. A shift in pay strategy is coming, but not for everyone

Berkey anticipates that top-flight candidates will remain in a strong negotiating position in 2023 — in part due to the increased focus on candidate quality. Berkey said 'stretch candidates,' whom he described as candidates who don't necessarily have the experience but have the attitude and aptitude that make them compelling applicants, will have a tougher time than they have in the past two years and will be met with more reasonable salary offers.

Overall, Berkey expects the pendulum to swing toward pre-Covid compensation levels but not quite a full return. 'I still think wages are going to climb more than we've seen in the past,' he said. That's particularly true for highly skilled candidates. Berkey expects they will still receive aggressive compensation packages.

There are growing signs of a disconnect on pay, with the inaugural Monster Work Watch Monitor finding 42% of employers saying salary expectations have reached unreasonable levels. That's up from 30% a year ago. That's not a surprise to recruiters, who have previously told The Playbook that many companies were backing themselves into a corner with salary offers and raises they were approving in 2022."

Look Beyond the U.S. to Global Markets: Two Easy Ways to Increase Your Sales

Selling to international markets will help you grow your business in these uncertain economic times by using two key strategies:

- Globalize your website to drive more international visitors and buyers to you - Learn some simple, low-cost techniques to increase visibility in overseas markets
- Work with an Export Management Company (EMC) who can handle export marketing, management, and logistics for you, and learn how to find EMCs that match your company's needs - Learn about the new EMC directory from the U.S. Commercial Service
- Expert Joshua Erickson, Program Manager of the U.S. Commercial Service's Rural Export Center, will explain key ways to make your ability to export easier and more successful.

You will also hear from two companies who increased sales by using these strategies.

Wednesday, April 19, 2023, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM PDT

Link to register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/look-beyond-the-us-to-global-markets-2-easy-ways-to-increase-your-sales-tickets-559954177017>

Presenters:

Joshua Erickson
Program Manager
U.S. Commercial Service's Rural Export Center

Hosted By

Cynthia Murray
President and CEO, North Bay Leadership Council

Dr. Denise Lucy
Executive Director, Institute for Leadership Studies at Dominican University of California

Elizabeth Krauth
Director, U.S. Commercial Service, North Bay Office at the Barowsky School of Business at Dominican University of California

Presented By

Dominican University of California Institute for Leadership Studies

North Bay Leadership Council

U.S. Commercial Service

Community Partners

Marin Small Business Development Center

San Rafael Chamber of Commerce

For more information, contact:

ils@dominican.edu or call 415.485.3202

Members in the News

Sonoma Raceway Air Show Will Again Thrill Fans Prior to Toyota/Save Mart 350 Green Flag

Fans at Sonoma Raceway's Toyota/Save Mart 350 in June will momentarily shift their focus from track to sky for a dramatic air show as part of the pre-race festivities.

Northern California Public Media Received Award for Winning Best Annual Report at the NETA Public Media Awards!

Northern California Public Media received our award today for winning best annual report at the NETA Public Media Awards!

Exchange Bank Plans Marin County Trust Office

Santa Rosa-based Exchange Bank (OTC: EXSR) has announced plans to open a trust and investment office in Marin County this summer.

Sonoma Raceway Blood Drive

Donors can get their hearts pumping with a "hot lap" around Sonoma Raceway's 12-turn road course prior to donating blood. Donors will ride along with a professional driving instructor in a Sonoma Raceway Camry.

Sonoma County Tourism Wins Three Prestigious Marcom Awards

Sonoma County Tourism (SCT) earned top honors in multiple categories in the international competition for marketing and communication professionals.

Dutra Wishes Bill Dutra a Happy 50 Year Anniversary

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Bill on his 50th anniversary at the helm of The Dutra Group, and to express our sincerest appreciation for Bill's vision and passion throughout this tenure.

North Bay Children's Center – New Year Brings New Opportunities

NBCC is excited to announce the opening of its second toddler classroom in Sonoma County and the launch of a new associate teacher apprenticeship program in Marin.

Comcast Partners with National Skills Coalition to Close the Digital Divide

National Skills Coalition (NSC) announced today a partnership with Comcast to educate local, state, and national decisionmakers about the benefits of the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to promote digital equity and opportunity nationwide.

W. Bradley Electric's CEO Leslie Murphy Inducted in to the YWCA Marin Women's Hall of Fame

The event honors five extraordinary women who will be inducted into the Marin Women's Hall of Fame and celebrates the successes and growth of women's contributions.

The Press Democrat Selected by Report for America for Grant to Report on Mental Health Effects of Local Disasters

The Press Democrat is among several dozen newsrooms across the country to receive a grant to help fund a new reporting position.



Over thirty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

707.283.0028 / E-mail info@northbayleadership.org
www.northbayleadership.org