

Access to Experts



Deborah Dagit
Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer
Merck

Deborah Dagit joined Merck & Co. Inc. as the Chief Diversity Officer in June 2001. She has responsibility for global equal opportunity employment compliance, diversity, inclusion, work environment, and university relations strategy.

Under Ms. Dagit's leadership, organizations such as Diversityinc, Working Mother and the Human Rights Campaign have recognized Merck for its exemplary work in diversity and inclusion. Merck has undergone 50 different federal audits for compliance with U.S. Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity requirements for federal contractors since 1980 - each time, receiving a letter of compliance from the government.

Ms. Dagit introduced and leads the company's signature Global Constituency Group (GCG) strategy, which was launched with the creation of 10 global teams representing 32 countries. These groups are: Men, Women, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native/Indigenous, Differently Able, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, Asian, Interfaith and Generational. Each team is made up of 15-20 senior leaders representing the company's best talent across various business units and geographies.

These teams are charged with recommending both talent development and marketplace- focused best practices to be integrated into the company's HR and business practices. The teams' work guides the Company's diversity and inclusion strategy globally. In addition to the 10 GCGs, Merck also has seven Employee Resource Groups, a Chairman's annual global diversity awards program, and plays a key role in well known educational outreach and philanthropic initiatives with strategic partners.

Ms. Dagit joined Merck from Silicon Graphics, Inc. where she was a Director of Learning Communications and Diversity since 1993. Prior to Silicon Graphics, Ms. Dagit was Senior Manager, Strategic Cultural Initiatives for Sun Microsystems, Inc. from 1991 to 1993. Previously, she founded and managed Bridge-to-Jobs, a job placement organization through which she personally placed 400 people with disabilities into full time employment. She played a key role in the passage of the American with Disabilities Act through lobbying efforts in California and Washington, D.C.

Ms. Dagit earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Oregon State University, and completed her master's coursework in clinical psychology at San Jose State University. She is a past Chair of the Conference Board's Workforce Council on Diversity and serves as co-chair of the Board of the Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network. She is the author of, "The Promise of Diversity: Reflections on the Not-So-Level Playing Field" and "An Employer's Guide to Hiring and Accommodating People with Disabilities."

Among her many awards, Ms. Dagit earned the 2005 Champion of the Year from Out and Equal; the 2004 "Employee of the Year" award from Careers & the DisABLED magazine; the 2000 Exemplary Leader Award from Silicon Graphics; the 1999 Advocate of the Year from the Black Employees Network; the 1997 Award of Professional Excellence from the Northern California HR Council; and the 1996 Tribute to Women in Industry award.

Contact Carol Courter, Manager, Corporate Communications, +1 212 339 0232, courter@conferenceboard.org

The Conference Board is a global, independent business membership and research association working in the public interest. Our mission is unique: to provide the world's leading organizations with the practical knowledge they need to improve their performance and better serve society. The Conference Board is a non-advocacy, not-for-profit entity holding 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status in the United States of America.