

June 18, 2020

*“I swore never to be silent whenever wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”*

These were the words expressed by Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and author, upon accepting the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. Today, when we hear the name George Floyd, we are reminded of his murder, as well as the violent deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and many others.

*“It may well be that we will have to repent . . . for the appalling silence of the good people.” - Martin Luther King, Jr., Cornell College, October 15, 1962*

Therefore, we must take sides. We cannot stay silent. Companies like ours must stand up.

At Bobrick, our Core Values instruct us to do the right thing, and to treat each employee with dignity and as an individual. As a White American I don't worry about getting pulled over driving home from work. Unfortunately, our Black colleagues do. In speaking with one such colleague, I learned not only about the steps he takes (e.g., driving a modest car, skipping a beer at an office Happy Hour, etc.) to reduce the risks of a potentially dangerous encounter; but also about how he is treated – in often demeaning ways.

Racism is not just a problem for Black people. It is a problem that every democracy must address. How can we be the very best company if each and every employee is not allowed to become his or her best? And, how can we be the society we aspire to be, when we suffer from racism? We must do our part. We need to find out where we have fallen short, and not tolerate racism within Bobrick. However, even that is clearly not enough. We must also listen, acknowledge, seek to understand, and dedicate ourselves to learn and improve; as individuals, as an organization, and as members of our community.

In light of recent events, I can affirm that being “colorblind or “not being racist” is not enough. And therefore, commit Bobrick to:

- Beginning to have conversations about race in life and at work.
- Adding inclusive management practices to our manager training curriculum.
- Introducing implicit bias training as part of our mandatory training, to help us become a more intentionally inclusive workplace; including our recruiting practices.
- Ensuring equity in our professional development and promotional processes.
- Identifying opportunities to address the issues of racial inequality within our communities by continuing to work with local nonprofits which provide support and mentorship to underprivileged youth, many of whom are people of color.

This is just the beginning of our effort to seek continuous improvement with respect to race and bias. I hope you will join me with empathy and curiosity in this much-needed conversation.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Louchheim".

Mark Louchheim