

AS SEEN IN *Forbes & Fortune*

HOUSTON'S EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN
DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

Unleashing the Power of Inclusive Leadership

National Diversity Council CEO Ángeles Valenciano transforms workplaces by opening executive minds to the power of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

As an immigrant in San Antonio in the mid-1990s, Ángeles Valenciano learned about the importance of inclusion by experiencing the lack of it firsthand. Though brilliant, college educated, and driven by a blend of kindness and determination, she faced obstacles. “I didn’t speak English very well when I first arrived. There were many barriers, but I learned to work around them,” she recalls.

After working in diversity and inclusion at JPMorgan Chase & Co., Valenciano was approached by Dennis Kennedy. He was launching the Texas Diversity Council, a nonprofit that would prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace. “It was 2003, and no one was talking about diversity,” she says. “But I left an organization and a successful career to do nonprofit work in diversity—in Texas of all places. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined it would take off the way it did.”

Today, with Valenciano as CEO, the organization, which branched into the National Diversity Council (NDC) and Global Diversity Council (GDC), has chapters and a presence via different events in 13 states and offers transformational training nationally and worldwide. Under Valenciano’s leadership, the Houston-based NDC has grown globally to offer consulting, benchmarking, and training for organizations ready to embrace a fuller understanding of DEI in the workplace. NDC’s two certification programs are changing the corporate landscape.

Upping Their Game

“Our flagship offering is the DiversityFIRST™ Certification Program,” says Valenciano. “Participants explore the business case for DEI, how to measure progress in these areas, and learn best practices. Over five intense but inspiring days, they explore the evidence showing that an environment of inclusion yields happier, more productive employees and a higher-functioning workplace.”

Participants have the opportunity to learn from subject matter experts in diversity, cultural competence, unconscious bias, and inclusive leadership. Since its inception, more than 1,000 people have completed the program, in person or virtually, and have earned the designation NDC Certified Diversity Professional.

The NDC’s latest offering is the DiversityFIRST™ Executive Certification Program. Participation is limited to no more than 15 executives, at the vice president level and above, who are committed to becoming change agents for DEI in their organizations. “By the end of each course, every participant has crafted a personalized Inclusive Leadership Development Plan with the support of a certified executive coach,” Valenciano says. “This plan provides a powerful jump-start to actual transformation in the workplace.”

Valenciano says she’s thrilled that the work of the NDC creates practical, positive change in a variety of industries. “Participants in our Executive Certification Program return to their organizations with a deeper understanding of the undeniable benefits of inclusion, and they put that knowledge to work. They implement their Inclusive Leadership Development Plan by transferring this new knowledge to the organization in order to stimulate organizational results. It’s a win-win for the participant and the organization.”



PHOTO BY LUIS VAZQUEZ



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