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TAKE AWAY POINTS FOR BERMUDA BUSINESS COMMUNITY

* The history of Bermuda is the history of, among other things, institutional racism and systemic white supremacy;

* This history has influenced job opportunities, educational credentials, housing access, wealth accumulation and incomes, in a way that has benefited whites and marginalized blacks;

* Although sometimes less blatant, racial discrimination continues to skew the opportunity structure in Bermuda, directly and indirectly: directly due to ongoing biases and stereotypes regarding black Bermudians, and indirectly due to the way in which mostly white "old-boys" networks and social circles still influence economic opportunity, job access, etc;

* Many of the policies, practices and procedures in the business community—from recruitment strategies, to performance evaluation criteria, to standards for determining qualifications and abilities prior to a hiring decision—can have the effect of reinforcing, inadvertently, racial, economic and gender inequity.

* Presumptions of merit are far from objective, and can be influenced by subconscious bias on the part of evaluators.

* Black Bermudians, as with any group that has faced marginalization and racial stereotyping, faces added pressure when trying to perform in a competitive atmosphere, be it a workplace, school or other setting. That pressure—to overcome negative stereotypes and "represent" their group in a positive manner—creates a degree of anxiety that can drive down performance, even when the person in question is equally or better qualified than those in non-stigmatized or privileged groups. Unless companies are aware of the way that this "stereotype threat" operates, they run the risk of underestimating black talent, both the detriment of individual black applicants or employees, as well as the company as a whole.

* There are evaluation mechanisms, including but not limited to non-cognitive variables (NCVs), which can provide valuable information about job applicant abilities, beyond formal and traditional credentials, and which also have a tendency to produce more equitable environments, with greater diversity and racial representation for otherwise marginalized groups. Among the NCVs found to effectively predict performance *and* produce more equitable outcomes, are: the degree of proven leadership abilities on the part of a job applicant; the presence of support systems in the applicant's life that can help them in the event of a personal or professional setback; the presence of coping skills for addressing instances of racial discrimination, real or perceived; the tendency to take a short-term or long-term view of success and accomplishment, and the extent to which the applicant is strong and secure in their particular racial and cultural identity (if they are a person of color

* Given the past and present racial disparities in Bermuda, the causes of which are outlined above, it is important that the business community in Bermuda send clear and unambiguous signals that it supports the principle of *deliberate and race-conscious efforts* to create racial equity in the workplace. Among these efforts would be the establishment of flexible, reasonable goals and targets for benchmarking institutional progress. This does not mean that it is necessary to endorse a particular vision of such efforts, but it does mean the endorsing the principles embodied by such proposals is an important step towards generating trust and good will on all sides of the Bermudian racial divide.