



Ralph Martin, managing partner of the Boston office of Bingham McCutchen and co-convenor of the Commonwealth Compact

Toward Greater Workforce Diversity

Ralph Martin, founding co-convenor of Commonwealth Compact,

the statewide diversity initiative housed at UMass Boston's McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies (www.commonwealthcompact.umb.edu/), uses the word "stickiness" in describing a corporate environment that retains talented employees. "A welcoming cultural climate gets them to come to the company, but stickiness gets them to stay," he says.

What creates stickiness in a corporation? The perception of opportunity and a feeling of being included are certainly important, but Martin believes something more fundamental is needed as well: a concerted effort to increase diversity by bringing more people into the conversation.

Workforce diversity has been a popular focus over the past few decades, but efforts to improve diversity have been little measured. The Compact, which was created to promote Boston and Massachusetts as places that welcome all races, ethnicities, and cultures, is changing that.

Bingham McCutchen has joined forces with eight other organizations to provide funding for the Compact's workforce diversity initiatives, which include publishing benchmark diversity data and the creation of a Talent Source network of professionals of color at all levels who can fill business leadership roles.

What the Commonwealth Compact Is Teaching Us

BY RALPH MARTIN

The good news revealed from the surveys is that a substantial majority of people really do feel that the racial climate and climate of acceptance of true inclusion have improved in the Boston area. The Commonwealth Compact hopes both to spur cultural changes in Boston and Massachusetts and to ensure that the rest of the country and the world view us this way.

It's been rewarding to see how self-sustaining the Compact has become and the tremendous momentum around establishing more programs, such as the Talent Source database and network. In the vibrant social-media culture of the coming generations, these resources will link people together across a number of different demographic lines.