



# Purpose, Policy & Protest: The Role of the Corporation on Social Issues

2018 PAGE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## Does a Polarized World Create a Polarized Workplace?

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*This panel observed Chatham House Rules, which state that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker, nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. The following summary complies with the rules.*

**“WE ARE IN A POLARIZED TIME AND WE ARE MORE THAN EVER RESPONSIBLE FOR HAVING CONVERSATIONS THAT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT SO WE CAN CREATE BONDS OF UNDERSTANDING AND MUTUAL RESPECT.”**

LOWELL EDWARDS

## Polarization Triggers

- Politics
  - National
  - Local
  - Global
- Gender representation in the workplace
- Economics and global trade impacting business decisions
- The decline of open discussion, exacerbated by social media divides



## The panel shared strategies for mitigating or managing workplace polarization:

- Providing employees with real-language talking points for answering questions about the company’s values or positions coming from neighbors, relatives, and friends.
- Training to identify and mitigate implicit bias.

- Fostering a focus on learning and finding solutions together, collaboratively, rather than a top-down autocratic approach.
- Rapid response to issues in real time and using real language, using tools like Yammer.
- Encouraging executives to be less scripted and more engaging.



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