Empowering the Future Workforce
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Founding Member Companies

We celebrate these pioneering partners for their visionary leadership.
Executive Committee and Founders

Ken Frazier
OneTen co-chair and former chairman and CEO of Merck

Ginni Rometty
OneTen co-chair and former chairman and CEO of IBM

Ken Chenault
Former CEO and chairman of American Express

Charles Phillips
Former CEO and chairman of Infor

Kevin Sharer
Former CEO and chairman of Amgen
Board Co-Chair Letter

When we started OneTen in 2020, we knew that there was power in the collective. We recognized that with the commitments from our more than 30 founding member companies, we would have the power not only to shift hiring practices, but collectively transform the workforce landscape in our country—a landscape that, for too long, has left qualified, skilled talent on the sidelines.

Now, a little more than two years later, together with our partners we’ve already begun to change the game. We’ve created a dynamic playbook for some of the largest employers in the country, one that showcases the power of skills-first hiring, which not only works, but is fundamentally better for both business and people.

As former CEOs of Fortune 100 companies, we can attest that the work we’re doing here at OneTen is truly transformational. To date, OneTen coalition employers hired and promoted tens of thousands of Black individuals without four-year degrees into family sustaining jobs. What’s more, we’re seeing evidence that our approach is one that can be successfully replicated and scaled to open up new sources of talent across many groups and impact more lives, more companies and more communities.

As much as we’ve achieved so far, there is far more yet to be done. To see true and lasting change, we must continue to promote the benefits of skills-first hiring with more ardor. We must continue to encourage and incentivize companies to shift mindsets and practices to widen and diversify the talent pool. Think of it this way: if a major league sports team only recruited from within state lines, it wouldn’t be at all competitive. It’s the same for companies. By continuing to look for talent in the same places, they’re leaving star players, with untapped potential, sitting on the bench. Whether a company is a team of five or 50,000, research confirms— they have everything to gain from looking for candidates who have the ideas, skills and experience to contribute, even if they haven’t followed what we think of as the traditional path to success. The leaders and companies in our coalition—for whom diversity, equity and inclusion sit at the core of their value system—understand this.

“To date, OneTen coalition employers and talent developers have hired and promoted tens of thousands of Black talent without four-year degrees into family sustaining jobs.”

For the CEOs and companies who have yet to embrace this exciting and inevitable transformation, consider this: there are currently 11 million unfulfilled jobs in our economy. Unless we dismantle some of the biggest barriers preventing industry transformation—skills gaps and an inability to attract talent—by removing the four-year degree requirement for the majority of family-sustaining jobs, we all lose. The good news is, there is no shortage of opportunity. With millions of jobs that can be re-credentialed and millions of skilled talent poised to contribute, there is no better time than now to pull these levers of change.

As we continue our work, we must remember that, collectively, we hold the power. The power to change outdated systems that are no longer working for us. The power to hold ourselves accountable for making long-overdue changes in our employment practices. The power to create a world—and future—that we want.

Ken Frazier
OneTen co-chair & former chairman &
CEO of Merck

Ginni Rometty
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Letter From Our CEO

The secret is out: the key to transformative hiring is embracing a skills-first approach. I’m proud to report that since OneTen’s inception in 2020, more and more companies and CEOs are listening to what we’ve been saying since our beginning—that when you become intentional about providing meaningful employment and advancement opportunities for Black talent and others without four-year degrees, everybody wins. Even more so, when this talent is given the chance to prove themselves, it also benefits companies who seek motivated, skilled people to take their business into the future.

In 2022, the evidence was all around us. While building infrastructure at an exceptional pace, we worked hand in hand with companies, talent developers and community organizations to champion a skills-first movement. As a result, we saw incredible success stories from our member companies. Founding partners like Cisco rapidly scaled a program to source, nurture and advance cohorts of diverse talent. We worked with Deloitte to expand its hiring pool in new ways and through new avenues. The Cleveland Clinic set out on door-to-door campaigns in its community to hire hundreds of skilled, Black talent in record time. Delta Air Lines led the charge and became the first airline company to remove the four-year degree barrier for pilots, following up with a call to action to its peers and competitors to do the same.

These are just a few examples, but they signify an important shift in the way companies are beginning to harness skills-based hiring. What was up until recently a fringe concept is now starting to be embraced by major leaders across industries. It’s our hope—our plan, really—that this disruption in traditional hiring practices will continue to grow, so that more Black Americans without four-year degrees can finally achieve the career success they’ve been ready for for a long time.

“We will further strengthen our commitment to equipping Black talent with the necessary tools and support they need to strategically advance their career growth and successfully navigate a fluctuating and highly competitive job market.”

The work we’re doing at OneTen has a ripple effect. By aggregating family-sustaining jobs across the largest employers in the country, we’re helping Black talent not only secure a job, but giving them the opportunity to build wealth. That is the difference that will end the opportunity gap and put the American dream within reach for the millions of people it has been historically and systemically denied to.

And now that we’ve gained momentum, we’re not slowing down. To advance even more change, we will work harder alongside CEOs and leadership at companies across the country to shift the hiring paradigm and thrive in an ever-changing business landscape. We will further strengthen our commitment to equipping Black talent with the necessary tools and support they need to strategically advance their career growth and successfully navigate a fluctuating and highly competitive job market.

These are big goals, we know, but we’re confident that by continuing to build on what we’ve created these past two years, we can achieve them. But this work needs more help. To truly drive long-needed structural change, we must all work together. Only then will all the barriers—those we can see and those we cannot—finally come crashing down.

We are now more than two years into this journey, and I am humbled to lead OneTen alongside our dedicated partners to accelerate this movement that will ultimately result in a future that is more productive and equitable for all. We’re doing the work, we’re seeing results and we’re even more excited for all the progress that’s yet to come.

Debbie Dyson
CEO
# 2022 Milestones

**JAN 2022**
OneTen expands to North Texas with the first of our “Let’s Talk Jobs” virtual town hall series, featuring Pulitzer-prize winning journalist, Trymaine Lee

**APR 2022**
OneTen expands to Raleigh and Durham with our second “Let’s Talk Jobs” virtual town hall featuring Grammy-award winning producer, 9th Wonder

**OCT 2022**
OneTen hosts its first in-person career coaching fair in Durham

**NOV 2022**
OneTen launches in Los Angeles and the Bay Area

**DEC 2022**
OneTen hosts its inaugural Technology Leadership Summit in Atlanta, bringing together top technology leaders from across the coalition

**SEP 2022**
OneTen partners with Udacity and the Blacks in Technology Foundation to offer 2,000 scholarships to train and empower Black job seekers in technology

**JUN 2022**
The OneTen Career Marketplace platform reaches more than 1,300 active job seekers

**JUN 2022**
OneTen launches its Career Marketplace platform to the general public with more than 1,300 active job seekers

**JUN 2022**
OneTen partners with DiverseForce to expand in Philadelphia

**JUN 2022**
OneTen partners with Udacity and the Blacks in Technology Foundation to offer 2,000 scholarships to train and empower Black job seekers in technology

**DEC 2022**
The coalition reaches 65 member companies

**DEC 2022**
The OneTen Career Marketplace platform closes the year with more than 40,000 cumulative job openings and 23,871 users

**JUN 2022**
OneTen rings the Nasdaq Closing Bell in honor of Juneteenth

**JUN 2022**
OneTen publishes its first “State of the Black Workforce” study with insights on how companies can hire, advance and retain diverse talent

**JUN 2022**
The coalition launches its inaugural Technology Leadership Summit in Atlanta, bringing together top technology leaders from across the coalition
Our Impact*

- 65 Coalition members companies
- 66K+ Hires†
- 22K+ Promotions†
- 3,000+ Cities in the U.S. with OneTen jobs
- 89% Retention rate
- 30+ Industries represented across OneTen jobs

* Cumulative as of December 31, 2022.
† All numbers represent data self-reported by coalition member companies as of December 31, 2022. Non-reporting coalition member companies are excluded.
Accelerating the Skills-First Movement
Accelerating the Skills-First Movement

For too long, companies have relied on traditional hiring and advancement practices, which typically include a four-year degree requirement. At OneTen, we believe that by challenging that status quo, we can not only bridge the opportunity gap and create a more inclusive economy for all, we can also help companies find driven candidates with the abilities, talents and potential to take their organizations to the next level.

Embracing skills-first hiring is crucial to the future of work. Skills-first hiring helps organizations:

- **Harness the Power of Diversity**
  - Skills-based hiring diversifies candidate pools, which fuels innovation and drives business performance. Embracing a diverse range of perspectives and experiences ensures that companies are well-equipped to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing business landscape.

- **Attract and Retain Top Talent**
  - As job seekers increasingly seek out companies that embrace diversity and inclusion, a skills-first approach becomes a competitive advantage in attracting top talent. Research also shows that candidates who are hired for their skills are more engaged and likely to stay at a company than degree holders in the same skills-based roles.

- **Cultivate Resilience**
  - Companies that prioritize skills-first hiring build more resilient teams and a more adaptable workforce. More so than degrees, skills are transferable and adaptable, allowing organizations to better navigate disruptions, pivot strategies and seize emerging opportunities.

- **Enhance Employee Engagement**
  - An inclusive work environment that values skills fosters a sense of belonging, leading to higher levels of productivity and loyalty. When employees feel valued for their abilities, they bring their whole selves to work, contributing their best and fueling organizational success.

- **Achieve Market Advantage**
  - Our interconnected economy requires companies to understand—and cater to—diverse markets. By incorporating diverse perspectives through skills-first hiring, businesses can better connect with customers, clients and communities, ultimately unlocking new growth potential.

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Hiring skills-first is 5x more predictive of future performance than a candidate’s education and 2.5x more than hiring based on experience.

The companies in our coalition who are making good on their pledges to hire and promote one million Black individuals into family-sustaining jobs know it best: the advantages of hiring for skills, not just degrees, contribute to a more competitive and resilient organization in today’s dynamic and competitive environment.

Nearly 65% of adults in the United States (76% of Black individuals ages 25 and above) are excluded from jobs because they lack a four-year degree.
Achieving Racial and Economic Equity

Closing the opportunity and racial wealth gaps in the United States is critical to the growth of our economy and the key to the continued success of our country. Yet inequities and systemic barriers, including the lack of family-sustaining jobs for those without a four-year degree, continue to stand in the way of progress.

Multiple recent studies show that, on average, White families in America possess more than 10 times the wealth of Black families. In addition, the current homeownership rate for white individuals is more than 70 percent, compared to just north of 40 percent for Black Americans—a figure that has only gotten worse over the last few decades. The good news? We know that catalyzing quality employment opportunities at scale for Black talent across the U.S. could effectively address these gaps and, in doing so, add trillions of dollars to the economy.

“Rooting out racial injustice in our society depends, in large part, on expanding access to economic opportunity. With shared commitment and collective action, this coalition can and will make a meaningful difference—one job, one person, one family at a time.”

Brian Sikes
President and CEO, Cargill

Impact Report 2022

On average, White American families possess 10x the wealth of Black American families.
Transforming Human Capital Management

More and more, businesses are recognizing their unique potential to make a significant impact on social and workforce issues through better employment practices.

In June, we surveyed our target workforce—Black adults without four-year degrees and earning less than $50,000 in household income. Our goal was to better understand the needs and beliefs of the Black workforce in order to identify how companies can leverage their roles as employers to create greater equity and economic opportunity.

Data shows that a four-year degree requirement for most jobs results in brilliant talent left on the sidelines—predominately Black talent—which further expands the wealth gap. It’s because of this partnership that we’ve been able to rethink and reshape our talent strategy focusing on skills.

Ed Bastian  
CEO, Delta Air Lines
Transforming Human Capital Management

Continued

Based on our findings, we identified four top priorities for companies that want to not only attract, but retain, Black talent:

1. **Committing to Skills-first**

   Out of the hundreds of Black individuals without four-year degrees that we surveyed, more than sixty percent are either unemployed or working part-time. Eager to step into more secure and fulfilling roles, this group represents an untapped talent pool. Companies that implement skills-first recruitment for jobs with living wages will have the most success attracting and retaining Black talent.

2. **Investing in Support**

   Salary is not enough to attract or retain Black talent. Black professionals also want to know the companies they work with will support them and invest in their advancement. Nearly half (47 percent) of participants in our survey shared that when searching for job opportunities, they value strong mentorship, career development, and promotion opportunities over higher wages.

3. **Prioritizing Professional Development**

   Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of individuals surveyed expressed an interest in deepening their knowledge and skills through education and technical certification. However, cost remains a barrier to access. One compelling option we have seen our coalition employers take includes paid training, such as professional apprenticeships. Through our work, we have seen the power of apprenticeship programs benefit both companies and employees by ensuring that employees don’t have to make the impossible choice between gaining competencies and being able to afford their expenses.

4. **Enhancing Internal Culture**

   Living wages and paid training may get Black talent in the door but retaining this talent and ensuring their career growth requires a strong internal work culture. Our survey revealed that a positive company culture is a greater factor in choosing to stay in a role than both salary and benefits. Across our work, we’ve found that a skills-first culture in every corner of the business—hiring, evaluation, compensation, advancement and promotion—works best. It ensures that brilliance is recognized, nurtured and supported, and it allows companies to retain and benefit from Black talent.

At Aon, we are committed to creating an inclusive and diverse workforce and talent pipeline. Through our collaboration with OneTen, Aon’s apprenticeship program creates new opportunities and professional networks to prepare future leaders and build a more resilient future.

**Greg Case**
CEO, Aon

By helping our member companies create and offer these opportunities, we are actively transforming traditional human capital management into a professional ecosystem that champions and empowers Black talent at every stage of their career.
Spotlight on Apprenticeships

Catching Up with Cammy Crockettte-Smith

Junior Analyst, Aon

In our inaugural impact report you met Cammy, a talented young Chicagoan completing an apprenticeship with the Commercial Risk Solutions team at Aon. Here’s an update on what he’s been up to since that initial conversation, including a career shift, a new degree program and making even bigger plans for the future.

“The last couple of years, the apprenticeship program in general, has been nothing short of amazing,” Cammy says. “And when I got an offer after completing the program? That let me know: ‘You’re an asset to the company. You have something valuable to offer.’”

After finishing the 24-month long apprenticeship program at Aon, Cammy thought he was set. He had proven his worth, secured a spot and was making a comfortable salary. But soon, he would realize his growth was far from over. In fact, his journey was just beginning.

“Even though I started in commercial risk, I always had an interest in investment banking,” he explains, “but it’s a hard area to break into and I wasn’t sure how I would even do it. It wasn’t until I chatted with a colleague, another former apprentice, that I even realized that Aon had investment banking roles. Once I knew the possibilities, I knew I had to try.”

With the help of this colleague, Cammy began making moves to make the transition possible. He connected with several other colleagues to discuss their experiences and get their advice and took several financial licensing exams in advance. Soon, he received an offer to become a junior analyst on Aon’s reinsurance team. And although he’s still new to the space, Cammy has felt nothing but support from his teammates.

“Everyone is phenomenal,” he says. “Going into this, my team knew I had a lot to learn. But they’ve been with me every step of the way.” Since making the transition, Cammy has worked more directly with clients and has had several opportunities to travel for work, including an off-site meeting in San Diego, CA, where he saw a palm tree for the first time.

Inspired by the encouragement and support he has received along his journey, he also decided to continue his education. Cammy is currently earning his bachelor’s in business administration at DePaul University part-time, an opportunity he says is possible because of the security his full-time job—and salary—offers. As for what’s next? In addition to continuing to learn and grow in his current role, Cammy also has his eyes set on future advancements in the firm.

“Investment banking offers a lot of opportunities,” he says with a smile, “and I’m excited for what’s next. I hope that in the next year, I’ll be ready for a senior analyst role. In the next few years, I think I’ll be an investment banker.”
Becoming a Force Multiplier

The member companies who have joined our coalition share one common goal: to hire and promote one million Black Americans into family-sustaining jobs over the next ten years. These companies represent some of the largest employers in the United States and hold themselves accountable to their OneTen commitments. In cities across the country, these employers are leading local efforts to build a robust ecosystem of partners working together on behalf of Black talent.

Inspired by our work together, many of our member companies have focused significant effort on creating scalable processes to attract, hire and retain Black talent. Noteworthy developments include:

**Cisco**
With the support of hiring managers and leaders, Cisco’s teams conducted more than 1,500 interviews and hired more than 140 employees through OneTen. The company has since expanded its OneTen Program to include support services for candidates and on-the-job training and professional development for new hires, and promoted more than a dozen new OneTen hires within their first year.

**Deloitte**
With OneTen’s help, Deloitte widened its talent pool to reach out to hundreds of non-degreed candidates in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for a variety of roles, and has since expanded its efforts to fill additional roles nationwide.

**Delta**
At the end of 2021, Delta Air Lines removed its four-year degree requirement for pilot applicants, creating additional career pathways for hundreds of qualified candidates with relevant life and leadership experience.

In 2022, our coalition grew to 65 employers with on-the-ground presence in more than 20 markets.

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Impact Report 2022
Building Trust with Talent
Building Trust with Talent

During our first year, our priority was to build the OneTen coalition by establishing our vision and bringing employers and talent developers to the table. In 2022, we focused our efforts on building trust with Black talent.

We’ve always recognized that to achieve our mission, we need to do more than post job listings or make a few phone calls. We need to build and sustain trust by truly showing up for Black talent. That means meeting them where they are, valuing their perspectives and listening to their needs.

We started the year out strong by hosting our first virtual town hall in January, hosted in Dallas in partnership with Radio One. We then spent much of the year on the ground, expanding OneTen’s footprint in the communities where Black talent live. Across the country, we established and grew formal relationships with community-led organizations who, in turn, helped connect us with civic leaders, religious organizations, neighborhood centers, community colleges and others. These localized efforts not only helped us gain a better understanding of the unique needs of Black talent, but gave us opportunities to strengthen the local ecosystems that serve them.

In June, we launched our first campaign to increase awareness of our mission and the commitment of our coalition companies. Aimed at bridging the gap between aspiration and achievement, the campaign demonstrated the benefits of family-sustaining, salaried employment while reaffirming the transformative potential of Black talent without four-year degrees. We launched our presence across key social media channels, quickly attracting an audience of individuals committed to disrupting traditional hiring practices to create a more equitable workforce.

In November, we furthered our promise to connect Black talent with attractive and accessible jobs by hosting a virtual meetup for California. Made possible through our partnership with LeadersUp, this event introduced more than 100 candidates with talent acquisition teams from Deloitte, Sam’s Club and Nike. We expanded on the success of the event with a subsequent virtual meetup, hosted in partnership with Bank of America, where talent had the opportunity to learn more about careers in the finance sector as well as the organization’s hiring process.

We’re proud of the goodwill we’ve been able to establish, but recognize that this foundation is just the beginning. To keep this hard-earned trust, we need to continue to partner with talent as we work towards closing the opportunity gap in the U.S.
Meet Nichole Bradley

Employee Relations Coordinator, Delta Air Lines

“I’m a shy person, I’m not always the most vocal. But seeing a woman in power, who is doing what she’s got to do, even when it’s hard, gives me hope for myself.”

Growing up in Augusta, Georgia, Nichole Bradley always knew she wanted to forge her own path, away from her large and bustling family. And after deciding to make a career pivot after years working as a pharmacy tech, an opportunity finally presented itself: to become a customer service representative for Delta Air Lines. The only catch? The position required a relocation to Minnesota.

“My plan was always to stay on the East Coast,” Nichole explains, “But I was one of those who thought, ‘Hey, I can do this all by myself. But after packing everything I had in my little car, driving through two blizzards and realizing I was all alone in this new place, I cried like a baby.’

Determined to make the best of it, Nichole threw herself into her role, helped along by team members and leaders who encouraged her growth and helped her adjust during her first Minnesota winter. After growing in her role and beginning to teach internal educational courses, Nichole learned about Delta’s apprenticeship program, offered in partnership with OneTen. Inspired, Nichole applied, was accepted and moved to Delta’s headquarters, happy to be closer to family and friends in Georgia’s Atlanta area.

Through the program, Nichole immediately transitioned into a coordinator role, a position she will continue to hold after completing the one-year apprenticeship. This, she explains, is one of her favorite aspects of the program.

“You get to learn how the position works, what the role looks like, what your team actually does on a day-to-day basis,” she says. “Because I’m already in this role, I feel like I have the space to explore and grow, but with a safety net.”

“I’m in an environment where people want to grow, want to encourage and motivate each other. I’m learning how to reach out for help, how to ask people, ‘Hey, can I see what you’re doing? What can I learn or do better? I’m having this specific issue, can you offer some advice?’”

This internal network of collaboration and help, Nichole explains, has not only contributed to her success so far, but is a legacy she intends to continue well after she completes the program.

“As people, we can all connect on any level, even if we’re not the same color,” she says. “But it’s special to have women in your corner who not only look like you, but who speak your language. When I first started at Delta, my leader was Melvina, a woman who was the same color as me, with these really beautiful, colorful dreads.”

“During my first review with her, I was nervous and didn’t want to open up. But she had seen crystals on my desk, so she started a conversation about that. By the end of that 30-minute conversation, I trusted her. I know now that I want to be that kind of leader: the kind that knows what they need to do to build trust. Because that’s how people grow—through connection.”
Catalyzing Pathways to Growth
Catalyzing Pathways to Growth

We recognize that to truly set Black talent up for success, we need to do more than simply match them with jobs: we need to empower each individual to gain the skills and competencies they need to succeed in their new role. Providing these essential skills training, professional development and credentialing opportunities is only possible with our network of endorsed talent developers.

We’ve built relationships with more than 100 organizations in order to build a scalable and sustainable ecosystem through which Black talent can enter into family-sustaining careers and thrive. These talent developers and talent partners represent a range of educational and skilling models designed to accelerate careers for Black talent and create lasting business value for employers.

After OneTen first launched, I saw the work the coalition was doing and how it was progressing. The employers who were joining the initiative, the ability to create high-growth careers...those are some of the reasons we decided to partner with OneTen. When you partner with organizations that are doing great things, it helps you reach and impact more people, faster.

Tekisha Lee
Founder and CEO, DiverseNote Mobility
Talent Developers

Our network of partners play a critical role in transforming the economic potential of individuals without four-year degrees and helping fill employers’ most in-demand roles. By connecting talent developers directly with employers to build meaningful connections and create formal talent pipelines, OneTen is helping shape a more equitable and effective future workforce, today.

Our 2022 Progress

This past year, OneTen supported the development or expansion of skill sets for thousands of Black talent through a strategy that included:

1. Endorsing more than 50 new talent developers and apprenticeship partners, including Jobs for the Future and Multiverse, providing a variety of professional training opportunities for in-demand skills

2. Building strategic partnerships with more than a dozen talent solution partners, such as Randstad and Revature, to expand our capabilities to connect qualified talent with member employers

3. Designing a new micro-pathway in partnership with Education Design Lab and Community College of Philadelphia to help talent land exciting, sought-after jobs in cloud computing and manufacturing

4. Awarding more than 2,000 scholarships to Black talent to enhance their skills in areas like business analytics, digital marketing and web development, in partnership with Udacity and Blacks in Technology
Launching Our Career Marketplace

After more than a year in development, we launched the OneTen Career Marketplace to the public in June 2022. This free, one-of-a-kind job platform was created with and for Black talent in mind. In addition to matching skilled Black talent without four-year degrees to in-demand roles at sought-after employers, the Career Marketplace also helps talent take their career to the next level by connecting them with top skills training providers.

+40k
Job Postings

+23k
Users*

Embracing a skills-first approach, the OneTen Career Marketplace enables talent to create a profile that highlights their competencies and experience, rather than degrees. In addition to being able to browse open job postings, users are directly matched with roles that fit their skillset and career aspirations—no degree required. Users of the site can also:

- Explore skills-based learning opportunities offered by our endorsed talent developers, designed to help talent expand existing skills or learn new ones.
- Access professional support throughout the hiring process, from help with resume writing to tips on interviewing.
- Connect with support resources to ensure talent is set up for success from the very start, including childcare and mental health services.

The Career Marketplace is a tangible way we’re helping open up new pathways to economic and advancement opportunities for Black talent that have long been kept on the sidelines. We’re excited to continue to expand this platform in order to connect more talent with high-growth careers designed to help them thrive.

* As of December 31, 2022
Meet TJ Fisher
OneTen Program Manager, Cisco

After more than nine years working in the same role, TJ Fisher felt stuck. With a wife and three small children, he wanted to advance his career and make a higher salary, but didn’t have the time to dedicate to a degree program.

“The organization that I was working for...they weren’t willing to promote or support those that didn’t have a degree,” he explains. “And I was looking for more.”

Then Keyana Tyson reached out to him via LinkedIn. She told TJ that with his talent and determination, he would be a good candidate to join her at Cisco, where she was working with the newly established OneTen program. “We call her the Super Recruiter,” TJ says with a laugh. “She has a knack for finding the right talent.”

And while he initially joined Cisco as a project specialist, TJ has since been promoted twice and now serves as the organization’s OneTen program manager. In this role, he has a high level of autonomy, with the freedom to shape initiatives and drive the organization’s goals forward. He also gets the chance to work directly with new hires.

“Sometimes, these talented people have worked for 10 or even 15 years, and they’re not getting what they should be paid,” he continues. “They’re hungry and eager to learn, but they feel less than. They feel like they can’t get hired at a company like Cisco because they don’t have a degree. And now I get to look for these people, to have those conversations. I get to help.”

In addition to recruitment and hiring, TJ also has a hand helping establish Cisco’s upskilling and training programs. “Cisco will give you as much training as possible to make sure you thrive,” TJ says, “especially in that first year. We don’t want you to only get hired, We actually want you to get promoted.”

Based on his own experience joining Cisco, TJ appreciates what it means to join a company actively invested in your growth. He also knows that in addition to providing a sense of pride and purpose, this investment offers another important benefit: greater financial security and freedom.

“It’s an amazing feeling, to have those conversations with the people we’re hiring,” he says. “Someone will tell me their salary expectations, and our offer will exceed those goals. To see the joy on their faces when you’re presenting them with an offer, there’s nothing like it.” It’s a joy that TJ knows himself, having been in the same position not too long ago.

“Before, I was making ends meet, but that was it,” he says. “Now, my salary has doubled. I’m truly blessed to be in the position that I’m in. I don’t have to stress about normal, daily activities anymore. I can go on trips. I can take care of my kids. I have the opportunity to save for my family’s future.”

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For too long, companies have relied on traditional hiring and advancement practices, which typically include a four-year degree requirement. At OneTen, we believe that by challenging that status quo, we can not only bridge the opportunity gap and create a more inclusive economy for all, we can also help companies find driven candidates with the abilities, talents and potential to take their organizations to the next level.

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