

CUES 125: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as a Differentiator—an Interview With Steve Bugg

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By **Steve Bugg**

Lisa Hochgraf 00:04

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Lisa Hochgraf 00:15

Thank you, CUES podcast listeners, for tuning into the CUES Podcast. As you know, on the CUES Podcast, you can hear from a wide range of cross-industry experts discussing trends and topics relevant to you. My name is Lisa Hochgraf, and I'm senior editor for CUES and its *Credit Union Management* magazine. I will be your host today.

Lisa Hochgraf 00:38

So I'm curious if any of you set a New Year's resolution? And I wonder if any of your resolutions have to do with leading a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative at your credit union in 2022? On today's show, we'll be talking about the DEI journey of billion-dollar Great Lakes Credit Union in the Chicago area. Our guest, CUES member Steve Bugg, is president and CEO of Great Lakes Credit Union, which recently earned the distinction of being named the first-ever CUES DEI: Catalyst for Change Award recipient. You can learn more about the CUES recognition programs, including the DEI Catalyst for Change Award at cues.org/awards.

Lisa Hochgraf 01:17

Bugg became president and CEO at Great Lakes about three years ago after spending more than a decade on the leadership team of Heritage Federal Credit Union in Indiana. In the show, Steve talks about how his organization has gone about taking its first steps to formalize its diversity, equity and inclusion program as a way to drive better business outcomes, create an ever-better place to work and, most importantly, better serve the credit union's members and communities. Steve offers great support and ideas for credit union leaders who might feel overwhelmed about starting out on a DEI journey. So listen for that. And also be sure to listen for the fun story at the end about the very special necktie Steve wore when he accepted the DEI Catalyst for Change award. So let's get started.

Lisa Hochgraf 02:17

Welcome to the show, Steve.

Steve Bugg 02:19

Thanks for having me on the show, Lisa. It's a pleasure to represent Great Lakes Credit Union and its staff today with you.

Lisa Hochgraf 02:26

Congratulations on Great Lakes Credit Union being honored with the first-ever CUES DEI: Catalyst for Change Award.

Steve Bugg 02:33

Thank you, Lisa, from all of us, from our board of directors, the leadership team, our DEI employee engagement committee and our staff. We're really humbled to have been recognized with the first-ever CUES DEI: Catalyst for Change Award for our DEI journey. I do realize that a lot of credit unions are making great strides in regards to DEI and really for us to be considered for the award amongst all of those other credit unions is just really simply amazing and we're thrilled with the recognition.

Lisa Hochgraf 03:03

It's very deserving, Steve. So before we get into talking more deeply about diversity, equity and inclusion and your journey, I'd like to help our listeners get to know you a little bit better. The way I often do this is by inviting our guests to share a professional quote or a mantra that they live by. Would you have such a quote or mantra to share?

Steve Bugg 03:23

Sure. So for life in general, I like to always say you should be who you are, and say what you feel. So generally, in business, my leadership style is very open, honest and transparent. So I tell the team that I directly lead that I really have three leadership attributes that I really focus on with them. One is I try to be a consultant a lot of times and just providing them information or different things to think through. The second is really more to try to sell them on a concept or something, I think that for the credit union, we may want to take a look at and then occasionally, yes, I do have to pull out the tell and really provide that direction. And sometimes that is needed, but I really try to rely on that attribute a little bit less than being a consultant and/or selling. And so sometimes I really find about with my direct leadership style that becomes very clear to them on what of the three options they're really looking at, and that they need to explore.

Lisa Hochgraf 04:24

Thank you for those quotes. I feel like your first one that you live with all the time, in professional and personal life fits beautifully with the DEI conversation we're gonna have today. And the second one makes me think that people must like being led by you.

Steve Bugg 04:38

I hope so. Right. But I will say the quote was interesting. So when I first joined GLCU, the board when I interviewed had asked me the same question you asked, and so I told them that and, you know, they paused, commented, moved on. About six months later, I hosted a get-together for our board and one of our board members presented me with this beautiful, engraved serving tray made out of wood. And that quote was ingrained in the middle of that board with my hire date at GLCU. And I thought, really remarkable No. 1 for him to remember that, and he was a newer board member at the time. But I still treasure that and have that today, three and a half years later. And I really felt like that quote resonated with the board, in particular him. But certainly it is that mantra that I live by as well.

Lisa Hochgraf 05:30

That's a great story that goes with your quote. I just love that. Now to kick off the meat of the matter, I'd like to ask you about the inspiration or the motivation that made you launch the diversity, equity and inclusion initiative at your credit union. What was, shall we say this is the wordsmith playing with words, the "catalyst" for your credit union's work in this area? Why did you tackle this when you did?

Steve Bugg 05:52

So realistically, Great Lakes Credit Union has really been committed to diversity, equity inclusion more than 80 years ago when the credit union was started. And we have always served a very diverse membership base in the Chicagoland area. And we started back on the naval base, Great Lakes, that's where our name came from, but then expanded out into the communities and then also through merger and acquisitions have rolled in other SEGs, other community credit unions, and again, really serve that diverse membership. So in the past, up until about the last year, our functional business units really worked on DEI initiatives under their own foundation for their functional area. And then we made the strategic decision that we needed to bring them all together under one pillar. So we have strategic pillars. And so our fifth pillar is our financial empowerment pillar. And so that really fits with what our DEI initiatives under so we brought them from the functional business units now under the one pillar, which allows the entire organization from our board through the leadership team and the staff to understand how we're pulling all of these initiatives and efforts together as we continue on that DEI journey. One thing that we realized: A lot was being driven by our board of directors and our leadership team, but we were missing that component from our employees. They'd make suggestions here and there, but it wasn't formalized. So a few months ago, we decided that we would bring an employee engagement group together to volunteer to serve on a DEI committee, where they would help develop a strategy for our DEI initiatives, where they'd help educate our internal members, our external members, and pull our community activities and events for DEI under the strategy. So we had a lot of employees raise their hands to participate. During that time, it was a lot of remote work. So their committees met virtually until recently we started coming back, but they decided that they wanted to really first start with the things that we were already doing, but educating the rest of the organization on what those initiatives and efforts were, and then expanded on educating internally, our employee-owners on what DEI really is for the credit union, and then how does that not only help us as an institution, but what does that really mean in the community? And they spent a lot of time talking to external sources on DEI as they were strategizing. We also have our chief administrative officer, Michael Hurst, who is the executive over that team. So he can help guide them on our strategic initiatives to make sure that they're folding their opportunities that they're exploring into that overall strategy. And so through this process, we started really our new DEI journey by bringing together our employees, our community stakeholders, as well, to really make sure that we don't forget who we serve, and that we continue to bring into our strategy those DEI initiatives as they evolve and change and as we as an organization evolve and change as well. So kind of more of that formalization of our DEI committee was a more structured approach strategically to ensure that all of the diverse voices of our members and employees are present in everything that we do at Great Lakes. And so that committee of diverse set really, our representatives have that voice now and enhancing our strategies, communicating the achievements, educating our employees, and then certainly driving forward with the engagement of our communities that we serve.

Lisa Hochgraf 09:44

I really like this idea that Great Lakes credit union has this long history of serving everyone in its membership and thinking about everyone in its membership. I feel like that's something that other credit unions who are maybe feeling a little intimidated by getting about getting started on a formal DEI journey might be able to take stock in and say, "Well, that's a root that we have too. We work hard to serve everyone and to serve everyone in our membership well, and that's what Steve at Great Lakes Credit Union did is they looked at that, and then they formalized it. So it's more of taking something that you do already and focusing on it, giving it structure. Is that a fair statement to offer to other credit unions that are thinking about this?"

Steve Bugg 10:23

Yes, Lisa, I think that really is something that all credit unions, if they stop and think through what they already do, and what they've done for years, and look, internally, they'll find that they're already doing initiatives that would fall under Dei, and it's through the financial literacy, financial wellbeing programs that credit unions offer, it could be a select product or service. So for example, at Great Lakes, we have a payday lending alternative at a lower interest rate. And that fits that diverse segment of the population that we serve. We also have a bank on national certified checking account. So a lot of credit unions have second chance checking accounts, which are very similar and would fit that need as well. So a lot of times, it's just stepping back and looking through a different lens at your organization. And in taking those tidbits of information, and then bringing those together to more formalize what that strategy should look like. And I think many credit unions, Lisa, to your point, would be amazed that they're already doing some great things internally and externally, that would fall under a formalized DEI strategy.

Lisa Hochgraf 11:37

I'm kind of wondering too, if you feel like formalizing your strategy has helped you go deeper, like to push it out through the whole organization, sounds like from what you were saying earlier? Or maybe to examine it through some new lenses. Would you say that formalizing has helped you with that?

Steve Bugg 11:52

Yes, I would agree that formalizing the DEI strategy and bringing it together does create more awareness internally, through all stakeholders, including our board and staff. And then also in the community, it has really opened a lot more doors for us as an organization. When we really started formalizing and focusing on a DEI strategy, instead of having functional units going out and doing their own thing, we're able to bring that back under that one pillar, and then the whole organization understands it, they're focused on it. And then that's something that we live by under our people helping people philosophy. And so it's easier for our staff to clearly understand and tell our story, right? So I always tell everybody, this is a great opportunity to develop your elevator pitch. And you don't have to be an expert on every product and service and everything we do. But you need to know enough where you can educate someone if you're in an elevator with them for five minutes, and then point them to that expert, right? So it does help us really strategize the focus of what DEI means to us. And then we can point to those examples that already exist. But it also has opened up our eyes looking through a different lens on other opportunities that we need to explore that would fall under DEI.

Lisa Hochgraf 13:13

So this is wonderful. I would like to talk a little bit about some of the things that I saw when I looked over your application for this award. For example, I saw that you aspire to adopt tangible sustainable DEI goals, policies and practices that are guided by your organizational mission, rooted in your core values and aligned with your strategy. That sounds really good. The question is, What do you mean by sustainable?

Steve Bugg 13:39

The definition that I use for sustainable, Lisa, is something that really stands the test of time, and that it's not viewed as a flash in the pan, or a reactive movement that eventually just kind of goes along the wayside or potentially fades away. So it goes back to what we were talking about earlier in formalizing a strategy. But once you formalize that strategy, just like we do for our credit union operations plan, we have to have goals and objectives. And then we have to have that access to those tangible resources, such as people and dollars, right? So capital, it could be human capital could be financial capital, and that's required for any organization. And the same thing stands true for a DEI strategy. It's just not going to happen on its own. So you have to make sure that you're providing as an organization, the right resources for those initiatives, efforts that you want to accomplish over time. And it's important to weave that DEI strategy into your daily decision-making and that overall credit union strategy because it is a journey. It's not just one thing, we checked the box and we move on. And we don't want it to become something that employees say, "Well, we're just going to work on this on the side because then we know what happens to those sort of initiatives." So it's something that you have to make a decision that you're constantly going to think about intentionally when you're working on your strategies. And we look at it in our project plans when we're looking at new products and services. One of the things we ask ourselves is, is that going to assist on our journey of moving DEI forward, and part of us formalizing the plan also brought to realization, for example, that in our vendor due diligence, we didn't have a question that asked potential partners about DEI, or are they a minority-owned business? So we've added that into our vetting of partners and re-vetting of existing partners on are they minority-owned, but also we ask them, What are you doing for DEI? Does that matter to you? And if you do have a strategy, can you comment on that strategy? So it helps ensure that the partners we choose to do business with align with our mission and our goals and objectives. And we have found since we've started that practice a few months ago, it opens our eyes as well to finding those partners that really align well with our organizational culture that then we know are really in it together with us to move the organization forward.

Lisa Hochgraf 16:18

It's a great example of a new way to cooperate, a new way to look at being partners. I like that a lot. In the materials for your application, you said that one of your expectations for the DEI program at Great Lakes would be that the policies and practices put in place for it would reshape the credit union's culture and help to strengthen the credit union's ability to carry out its member promise. So how have you seen the credit union's culture change, and what is stronger now about Great Lakes' ability to deliver on its member promise?

Steve Bugg 16:49

Sure, Lisa. So our employees, just like the members we serve, are very diverse. They have varying opinions, and they come from certainly all kinds of diverse backgrounds. So it's very rewarding to see them come together around the DEI initiatives, even those that have joined our DEI committee joined for different purposes. But the common thread is, diversity flows through their commitment to serve on that committee, but they were brought to that committee because of what diversity means for them, which does mean different things to different folks. And so they're interested to learn from each other, as they really engage in more respectful dialogue. When we announced the CUES award to the entire credit union, we all celebrated together. And it was really special and exciting as a leader to see that excitement built with our board of directors and our staff. And so we carry that excitement and that collaboration forward and know that it will really aid us in working closely together. And as a result of internally, the team working on DEI initiatives and efforts and celebrating those successes, we know over time, that journey will have a direct impact on the members we serve. But also it's not only about the members we serve, we look at DEI as how can we empower the communities we're part of. Even if you're not a member of the community, we want to make sure that we're providing you those tools and resources for financial empowerment, regardless of whether you decide to do your banking with GLCU. And so the member service we provide, right, it's really cause-related marketing really will resonate even with members that say, you know, what, I may not be as interested in some of these initiatives and efforts, but I want to bank with someone that I know cares about those in the community. So we kind of tie them in under the brand as well. And then we know also because we're listening to our members, we're better able to emphasize what we want to focus on with our membership, because they're then giving us that feedback that's gonna help us even develop a stronger journey under what DEI means to us and the communities we serve.

Steve Bugg 16:55

I love that it sounds like this effort, this journey is putting you in a better dialogue with your communities and with your members.

Steve Bugg 19:14

Right. And I think the phrase I like to say is, "It's more cohesive," so it ties our strategies together. So it's kind of that that cohesive environment that then over time ties the employees together. Certainly it ties us to the membership and the community. But it is something that takes time. And I think a lot of times organizations think, "Oh, this was really great. We're going to flip the switch and it's going to happen overnight." It doesn't as we know, and that is the one advice I'd also give other institutions is you got to stay the course. There's going to be peaks and valleys, right. You work through that and you become stronger by working through those challenges that come up and there will be challenges that come up. But if you view that as an opportunity to explore and have that kind of dialogue, you will be a better and stronger organization because of that.

Lisa Hochgraf 20:06

Wonderful. CUES is a professional development talent development organization. So I thought it was really interesting in your application that another expectation for the DEI program at Great Lakes was that it would be essential for attracting and retaining top talent. Has that happened? What are you seeing?

Steve Bugg 20:25

So for us, we view that as a long-term strategy that is really never completed, right. So it's bringing that awareness. But then culturally, it's developing that over time. So in some instances, I think we've done a great job on hiring diverse talent. But I think in other instances, there's opportunity to improve. So that is another reason why we have brought it under the one pillar, so we have more focus. So it's just not one area of the organization doing something on its own. Now, we're all working together on those same goals and objectives that we have. And we know because we want to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve, and that's not only from our employees, that also is our board of directors. So part of our initiative that our board has bought into and they're currently working on is what is the long-term strategy under board governance to have a more diverse board that represents the diversity of the membership we serve? So they're taking a deep look at the board makeup and the committee structure, and where and how over time, can we get more representation from the diversity that we have in our field of membership? So they're working through their committee structure to put programs in place when they're out looking for new committee members, new board members, a set of questions that they would go through when they're recruiting for these roles to make sure that the diversity is there, not only from the communities but from a skill set as well from an educational perspective, which I really applaud that because they are a volunteer board of directors. And sometimes that's tough right to look internally at yourself. And you're a volunteer saying, Hey, I'm not getting compensated at GLCU for this. And so I applaud their efforts in moving this initiative forward, even at the board level. Also, I would say that the board, by working on that, has a greater understanding of how our DEI initiatives impact us internally, from our products, our services, and how we support our membership. And so when we're talking about new product innovation and changes we're making, we'll have board members now say, "Oh, I understand that's going to serve this segment of our population," or "I see how this can help support this other demographic that we serve." And I find that very rewarding that the board is tying that now into the initiative that we've put forward on having kind of DEI stand up now on its own under its strategic pillar.

Lisa Hochgraf 23:00

I like how you're tying the board into this. I mean, it makes sense that if you look more broadly, you have a bigger pool from which to draw thinking, so you have more opportunities for more ideas. And that's not only true for staff, but also at the board level.

Steve Bugg 23:15

I think one other comment on that really quick Lisa is we all know there's a war for talent right now as well. And where we sit in the suburbs of Chicago, as we were talking prior to the call, we know, our employees can look at opportunities, other financial institutions or other companies. They're very plentiful here in the large metro market we're in. So we've got to tie what we do into a cause. Right? And you have to have that passion. And so we really believe DEI is that initiative and effort that we can clearly articulate what we're doing different and how we're making that work for us as an organization. And if we can then appeal to those that are out there looking for opportunities that want to tie into that cause and can see the greater good, they're going to be more loyal employees, because they have that in their heart. They're tying into that. And they're looking at it more than just a paycheck or a short-term role for two or three years. So have we seen the outcome of that yet? I would say no, that's early in our

journey. But that certainly is our goal is to be the employer of choice. But that ties back into the causes that we support at Great Lakes Credit Union under our DEI initiatives.

Lisa Hochgraf 24:32

It's very clear that you've made a lot of progress and done a lot of thinking and that you're committed to the long haul. So, in this moment, what is the outcome of the DEI program that makes you most proud of your credit union and your team?

Steve Bugg 24:46

You know, numerous things come up. That collaboration, that cohesiveness through the team, I think has been very rewarding for all of us here to see how we brought those initiatives from the functional areas together. But the thing that I'm most proud of is the work that we've done in our communities under the initiative. So certainly we've helped a lot of individuals and small businesses throughout GLCU field of membership gain access to additional products and services, education, and in some cases, even basic resources through COVID. We really helped with the three most vulnerable needs that we were seeing our community, which was housing relief, food relief, and then also support of minority-owned businesses, in particular led by females. And an initiative that percolated out of that was an opportunity to work on an incubator project in a diverse market that we serve with a local foundation. And we were the only financial institution that came to the table to play, to help in this incubator project. And through, that initiative, now those business owners are up and running, they're doing well. And they're using that concept to help other local small businesses. And now the foundation can pick that model up and move that into other diverse communities that we know if we're empowering those business owners, the communities are going to be better, and thus, the residents are going to be better as well. So from brand recognition and acknowledgement of what we've done, even though bringing all these initiatives together is recent for us at Great Lakes, we can already see the impact that that's made in a very short time. So I know over our journey that will continue to increase as we build momentum on these initiatives and efforts as well. And we're one of less than 10 credit unions nationally, that is a HUD-certified counseling agency. So a lot of our initiatives and efforts have really focused on what our housing counselors have been able to do in the community. And it's grant-based, they work through our foundation. And so they have supported thousands of households and individuals, especially through COVID, on evictions, on foreclosure relief, and also on assistance programs through the state of Illinois on mortgage assistance, rental assistance. We had to move to virtual counseling. That's worked well. We also now are back to face-to-face. But if I look at that small team, and what they've really accomplished, especially through COVID, but now they're sustaining those efforts, that's impactful to the communities we serve, we partner with the state of Illinois, the city of Chicago, and a lot of the local municipalities in the communities that we serve. And the need for those types of services is great. And what I would say to other credit unions, you may not have HUD-certified centers that are grant-based, that's okay, because it goes back to that point Lisa that we were talking about earlier. It's that financial literacy that is so important. So any organization can empower their employees to be better educated on how they can help those in their community and their membership be more empowered financially. And for us, that certainly has made a remarkable difference when we look at how we compete with everyone else. Because we know today everybody says they deliver great number service or customer service, have to have competitive products or services, have to have a great technology plan. But if everybody else can say the same thing, and a lot

of institutions that we compete against here can outspend us, right? What's the one thing that makes us unique and different? This is what it is. It's our initiatives and our efforts under DEI. And it's supported by our employees through financial empowerment. And to us, that does mean our HUD-counseling program, but to another institution, it could be their financial literacy programs, it could be if they have in-school branches. So it's that unique opportunity that you need to find that works for you and your organization, which may be different than the journey we're going down. But it all makes us unique and different and more relevant to the communities and the membership that we each serve.

Lisa Hochgraf 29:10

So Steve, from where you are today on the journey, what are your hopes for the future? I know there's not an endpoint, but if you could set some milestones out there for yourself and for Great Lakes Credit Union, what might they be?

Steve Bugg 29:22

So it's the continuation building upon the committee. And we have recently brought some newer employees into the committee that raised their hand as they were being onboarded that they'd like to participate. So it's getting new ideas and new suggestions. We still have a lot of opportunity to enhance our products and services to support the diversity in the community, certainly financial literacy and our HUD counseling programs. So we're attaching better measurement metrics to all of the programming so we can then go back and say, "Did this move the needle in the right direction and what does that look like?" So if it's working well, we want to continue it. But if it needs to be tweaked because the results aren't what we thought they would be, then we need to realize that and then change those strategies as well. And then it's also about the new membership that we're gaining. Why are they coming to us? And certainly, we want to measure if they're coming to us because of our cause-related marketing efforts. But overall, beyond us that our leaders today are on the board at Great Lakes, when we leave, we want to make sure that we're leaving the organization in a better place than when we joined. And that we're leaving it for future generations where it's sustainable, and where it's relevant, and where the next set of leaders and our board members can take us to that next level over time. But it's measuring the initiatives, the efforts, tweaking them on our strategies, and in looking at how we can part because we can't do it alone, right. So a lot of our success has been with our community partners. So it's strengthening those relationships, and finding out what other opportunities are there in the community that we don't know about today and then better serving those communities by partnering with others. And we learned that through COVID, where we could join resources with other community foundations and funders that would have a greater impact in the community than just trying to do something on our own. So it's choosing the right partners as well. But it's all about measurement. Right? So we at GLCU use a balanced scorecard to measure our success in multiple areas. And our balanced scorecard is expanded to also help us measure the success of our DEI initiatives and efforts as we continue on that journey. And so we realize that that combined success over time will really allow not only the communities to be more financially empowered, but we also need to do the same thing with our employees. And a lot of times we assume our employees have that knowledge and skill set. But we really know if we step back and look, they don't. So we want to also empower them so that then they can empower the membership and the communities. So to sum that up, it's a continuation. And it's that continual focus of that strategy and how that's woven into the other four pillars that we have as part of

our strategies and that we don't lose sight of those initiatives and efforts and that we look at this as an ongoing part of the fabric and DNA of GLCU.

Lisa Hochgraf 32:26

I love this idea of measuring, of refining and of keeping on keeping on this really great. So I have kind of a fun question, I think to ask, before we wrap up. I was part of the group that attended the CUES membership program when you accepted the CUES DEI Catalyst for Change Award on behalf of your credit union. And in that moment, on the video, you were wearing a very special tie. Would you tell us about that tie and the decision to wear it at that time?

Steve Bugg 32:56

Sure. Interesting fact that you pick that up. So kudos to you, Lisa for picking that up, very observant. So I first purchased that tie and wore it to work when we were early talking about DEI, and how could we look at what DEI mean to GLCU? How could we plow through the minutiae of what all these functional areas were working on and bring it together? And a brand new member of our DEI committee mentioned to me on that day that they really appreciated me supporting our DEI efforts and initiatives in the clothing that I wore, and I thought, what? And so it was the tie that tied them into what I was wearing that day, and in their mind and opinion that helps support, in a subtle way, the initiatives that were important to us as an organization. So I would say yes, it was an intentional purchase, but did not make a lot of fanfare of it when we started talking about those initiatives, but very observant from you, but also this employee that picked up on that. So when we were working with our marketing team on the video for acknowledging the award, this employee that was on the committee that had mentioned this and knew about the award had said, "Steve, you're going to wear that tie again, aren't you?" And I said "Of course, do you even need to ask that question?" So that's kind of that shining beacon, so to speak, to really illustrate in a subtle way the support for our DEI initiatives and efforts at the credit union in kind of a manner that reflects the diversity that we want to accomplish at GLCU. And so it's great that you noticed that and picked up on that as well. And I will say one of the initiatives from our committee throughout the year we celebrate events we celebrate acknowledgments. And so part of their education is to bring awareness to different ways that diversity impacts the community and what it really means to individuals. And so they've used the beacon tie, so to speak, as an example. And so if that can help some others understand how they can support DEI initiatives and efforts, then that's another way that we can help educate those internally at the organization. But again, very observant on your end for picking that up, Lisa.

Lisa Hochgraf 35:25

I tried to be observant. That's one of the things that we journalists do try to be. But tell me, I think that the listeners are probably wondering more details about this tie, like, what does it look like if you're comfortable describing it, and what made it significant to your employee?

Steve Bugg 35:40

Sure. So I think we could, right, push all of the listeners back to watching the video of all the CUES awards, so they can see what we're talking about.

Lisa Hochgraf 35:50

We could, and I will put a link to that show in the shownotes for this.

Steve Bugg 35:54

But I will say, so the diversity was the colors right of the rainbow that reflect diversity with those that relate to that within our community. And so for some employees, that's very meaningful and purposeful. And so for this one employee acknowledged that and brought that up. And it was interesting, because from some other employees that I would have never probably imagined them saying anything then, they were mentioning that as well, after they watched the video. So perhaps, right, it was when they saw the award ceremony and the video that they tied that back. So it does reflect the diversity that we stand for at Great Lakes Credit Union. And it also shows that as a leader, you're open and willing to accept change, and you're willing and open and transparent as well, knowing that these initiatives and efforts mean a lot to those that we work with daily, because it's not The Steve Show at Great Lakes Credit Union. It's all about the members we serve. And it's about our 225 employees. And I go back to it's that cohesive group that makes us stronger in the long run. And so whatever we can do as leaders to help support those initiatives and efforts, I personally find that very rewarding. And again, I go back to it's all about how we can become more relevant for our staff, and more relevant for the members in the communities as well. And, for us, at least at Great Lakes Credit Union, it's those initiatives and efforts that we're building and have built under DEI, right. And again, I think some of the programs have been in place for years and decades. It's just bringing them together and building more awareness that's really gotten us to this point in our journey and knowing that we need to continue that in the future.

Lisa Hochgraf 37:50

Thank you so much for all this insight and information. I will definitely put a link to the video so people can see you accept the award, much deserved, and wearing your tie. Thanks so much for being on the show today.

Steve Bugg 38:04

Thank you so much, Lisa. So on behalf of Great Lakes Credit Union. It's really been my pleasure speaking to you today about our DEI journey. And I do challenge other organizations to look at your organization through a different lens and I'm sure you'll come up with initiatives and efforts that fit under your DEI umbrella as well.

Lisa Hochgraf 38:25

Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to listen to today's episode of the CUES Podcast. And many thanks to Steve Bugg for sharing such great perspective on and moral support for embarking on a diversity, equity and inclusion journey. CUES will next offer its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Cornell Certificate Program Jan. 19 through March 23. As a graduate of this program, I recommend it highly. To learn more and to register for this or another online Cornell program. Visit cues.org/cornell. To read the show notes for this podcast and a full transcript please visit CUmanagement.com/podcast125. You can also find additional credit union-specific content on CUmanagement.com. To sponsor this podcast, please email weston@cues.org That's we s t o n@cues.org. If you're CUES member, you have access to invaluable membership benefits to further enhance your development, many of which are available virtually. Make sure to visit cues.org/membership to learn more. Thanks again for listening

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