The aerospace giant Lockheed Martin produces an annual diversity and inclusion report called “Destination: Inclusion.” It breaks down the company’s diversity goals and expectations and includes a sort-of report card on how they are performing in this area. It reports the fact that 25 percent of the company’s board of directors is women, and that 21 percent of the company’s overall “leaders” are women, 18 percent are people of color, and that 8 percent identify themselves as being a person with a disability. A specific program is something the company calls its “Self-ID Campaign,” which “encourages employees to voluntarily self-ID” so that the company knows where it stands regarding diversity and inclusion practices and programs. This program is also apparently used to aid in professional development and measure how effective Lockheed Martin is at outreach and recruitment of a broad spectrum of people. The company also took a day in December to spend time talking about differences in the workplace, the importance of embracing those differences, and how to fully comprehend their impact on the company’s value. They dubbed this the “Day of Understanding.” In 2018, the company held its first-ever International Women’s Day, during which speakers sparked dialogues about gender parity and workplace advancement for women.

Give Lockheed Martin’s apparent dedication to diversity in the workplace, it says it is committed to a host of employment laws that prohibit discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, sex, disability, and “other protected classes related to hiring, promoting, training, and terminating employees.” The company does not explicitly mention sexual orientation or gender identity as protected, but there are some laws on the books at both the state and federal levels that are aims aimed at protecting them as well, according to Katherin McAnallen’s piece for the National Conference of State Legislatures site called “Sexual Orientation in Employment Discrimination Laws.” They are not as all-encompassing, though. As an example of a specific law that Lockheed Martin must follow, there is Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law protects job applicants, and current employees, from discrimination in hiring, promotion, discharge, pay, fringe benefits, training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin.

While an internal report on how you are performing in a specific subject might have some merit, outside perspective typically shines a truer light on the matter. It is no
different for Lockheed Martin. A story by Alex Gangitano in The Hill from 2019 titled “K Street Executives Under Pressure on Diversity,” tells the tale of how major lobbyists in Washington, D.C., are failing to diversify at their highest levels. The story points to the top 10 spenders on lobbying in Washington, and that one two of them have women leading their efforts. Lockheed Martin was one of the eight who are led by men. These companies are feeling even more heat since the 2018 midterm elections, which led to the most diverse Congress in the history of the country. The internal report that Lockheed Martin creates every year shows that work is being done, and that’s it’s not all bad, but diversity in positions of power is an important signal to send. Diversity must be an institutional way of thinking, the article states, if it’s not being done at the top then there’s very little chance of that trickling down into the larger workplace.

For a company that employs more than 100,000 people, Lockheed Martin seems to be interested in not only diversity and inclusion, but also some level of transparency. It’s not a perfect scenario, but what company is perfect? It has institutions such as inclusion councils that involve everyone from the CEO to rank-and-file employees. These councils help create company policy that create a thriving culture. The company has a Utilitarian approach to diversity — actions that support the greater good. While there is certainly work to do given the size of the company, it has taken significant steps to provide opportunities to a broader array of people. While the article in The Hill showcases an area that needs to be addressed, Lockheed Martin appears to have the desire to create a more inclusive and diverse workplace. But people should take some comfort in the fact that Lockheed Martin’s CEO, senior vice president of human resources and vice president of global diversity and inclusion are all women — and two of them are African-American.

**Lockheed Martin: We’re Engineering a Better Tomorrow**

This 2014 Lockheed Martin advertisement does a decent job of displaying diversity, even though many of its lingering shots are focused on white males. Overall, there is a sense of inclusion, as there are genders and people of color represented. More than anything else, the point of this advertisement is the cool factor of the technology and possibilities of the future. It speak to the skill and talent needed to produce such incredible machines, even though some of them are for making war and that’s a little less desirable for some people. But women and people of color have prominent roles more or less throughout the entire commercial. It does not seem like diversity, though, is the main point of this particular marketing strategy. It is likely part of the equation, but not the central focus. In a somewhat secondary way, the inclusion of people of color
and women could have positive outcomes, but that does not appear to be the primary goal of the video.

It seems like there is an internal push for companies to focus their diversity programs more on the rank-and-file so those percentages go up, and less on the more meaningful leadership positions. That is not to say that large tech companies do not have women or people of color as leaders, of course they do, but my research showed there was definitely a difference in the percentages when you compared rank-and-file employees to the upper echelons of leadership. If there is a specific place large companies -- and really all employers -- should work on, it would be that. This article by Judith L. Turnock in Forbes called "Diversity at the Top: Leading With Purpose," goes into more detail about setting goals for diversity at the top. Companies can actually set diversity goals for their boards and C-suite leaders without compromising expectations. In fact, adding diversity might infuse the company with ideas new to its framework. Including people is in the business world’s best interests.