

# DIVERSONOMICS | EPISODE 4 - OVERCOMING BIAS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION

30 November 2016

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In this episode, Neena Gupta, co-chair of Gowling WLG Canada's National Diversity and Inclusion Council, shares how her experiences with unconscious bias as a young associate motivated her to champion diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, and develop new programs to foster D & I in the workplace.

## EPISODE TIP

"I think that when we are in meetings and groups, [we need to make more of] an effort to ensure that everybody's ideas really get a chance and that when somebody junior [...] comes up with a good idea, to make sure that person gets the credit or the recognition for it." - Neena Gupta, Partner at Gowling WLG



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## Transcript

**Roberto:** Welcome to Diversonomics. The podcast about all things diversity in the legal profession. We are at episode 4. I am your co-host, Roberto Aburto, a lawyer at Gowling WLG in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, practicing in municipal law and litigation. I am also one of the co-chairs of our National Diversity and Inclusion Council.

**Sarah:** I'm your co-host, Sarah Willis. I'm also of Gowling WLG practicing in commercial litigation and normally I'm in Ottawa but my UK adventures continue here in our Birmingham office.

**Roberto:** After our last episode with Lorna Gavin I understand there was some festivities in the Birmingham office. What was going on that day?

**Sarah:** Yes. At Gowling WLG in Birmingham we hosted a cocktail reception to celebrate Stonewall. Gowling WLG works really closely with this organization in the UK. It's goal is to make a difference for LGBT people at work, home and in their communities. So the goal is to challenge homophobic and transphobic bullying, celebrating differences and improving inclusion and visibility of role models. So they work closely with a lot of the organization and businesses here and they do some fantastic work. The cocktail reception was great. There were representatives from Gowling, from the City of Birmingham, obviously from Stonewall, as well as a number of local businesses and organizations. It really was just a great thing to see the work that they have been doing in Birmingham, both at Gowling's, as well as in the wider community.

**Roberto:** It's always exciting to see those kind of relationships and they have really been developing recently. Glad to see you could take that in and share that with us. Today we have our first Canadian guest. She is the other co-chair of our National Diversity and Inclusion Council and we are going to talk about diversity and inclusion at Gowling WLG in Canada. We'll discuss what we are doing and what is coming soon.

**Sarah:** I am very excited to introduce our guest and Neena, I don't believe we have had the opportunity to meet in person before. Neena Gupta is a partner in the Waterloo region in Toronto area. She focuses on a broad range of employment and human rights matters. Neena was called to the bar in 1988 in Saskatchewan and 1989 in Ontario. She has been recognized one of the best lawyers in Canada as well as listed in the Canadian Legal Expert Directory as one of the premier employer lawyers in Canada. Naturally we are very excited to welcome Neena. Welcome!

**Neena:** Wow! Thank you for having me on Diversonomics.

**Sarah:** Did we miss anything when we listed your areas of practice and accomplishments?

**Neena:** No, not at all. I've really been interested in diversity and inclusion for a long time. I did my Masters in Human Rights in 1992/1993 at the University of Toronto and have worked with a lot of legal organizations on these issues as well.

## CPD

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## EPISODE GUEST

### Neena Gupta

Neena is a partner in our Waterloo Region and Toronto offices, with a focus on employment law. She is also a well-respected speaker, and has taught human rights law at both the University of Toronto and Queen's University as an adjunct professor.

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