



Cindy-Ann L. Thomas

Principal

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Practice Areas

Inclusion, Equity and Diversity

Discrimination and Harassment

HR Advice and Counsel

Overview

With a keen awareness of intercultural dynamics in the workplace, Cindy-Ann Thomas adeptly navigates clients through multiple diversity and inclusion challenges and opportunities. She brings more than 20 years of experience and high-level credentials to her role as both a strategic process diversity consultant and an employment attorney. Company executives in a broad spectrum of industries, including government, healthcare, manufacturing, retail, higher education and professional services, look to her for diversity and inclusion services and counsel that emphasize talent development, engagement, productivity and retention.

Cindy-Ann's unique qualifications as a knowledgeable employment attorney and skillful facilitator are applied in training that extends from the executive ranks to the shop floor. She engages with clients in order to understand what they need. Specifically, and before any initiative is implemented, she gains deep insights into the client's workplace by conducting culture assessments. These assessments may be as informal as in-depth conversations with organizational leaders or they may extend to the development and deployment of a comprehensive "culture scan" that captures the views of diversity and inclusion expressed by the client's employees.

Licensed in Canada and the United States, Cindy-Ann possesses a multifaceted perspective on the design and implementation of meaningful diversity and inclusion initiatives that are not only legally compliant but harness the potential of both stakeholders and individual contributors. She delivers her customized training programs to organizations that range in size from Fortune 500 companies to small, local businesses.

Among her focused services are these:

- Facilitate executive orientation briefings geared toward assisting an organization's key leaders in identifying current capabilities and next steps
- Prepare and guide dynamic group workshops that raise awareness of and increase capabilities in working through diversity dynamics, unconscious bias and cultural competence
- Develop client-specific, turn-key educational materials that allow companies to self-drive their internal equal employment opportunity (EEO) and diversity training programs
- Deliver comprehensive EEO "train-the-trainer" programs for in-house facilitators
- Lead one-on-one executive workshops that increase leaders' diversity aptitude and skill development

For her vibrant and engaging training sessions, Cindy-Ann taps the resources of Littler Learning Group and its vast video library of contemporary diversity and inclusion scenarios. The videos' targeted vignettes depict real-life workday issues in a captivating and engaging way.

Cindy-Ann completed the requirements for designation as a Roosevelt Thomas Consulting & Training Subject Matter Expert, and she is also a Qualified Administrator for the prestigious Intercultural Development Inventory. She regularly speaks before professional associations, human resource groups, universities and industry trade groups throughout the country. Prior to her legal career, she was a human resources executive at an international business development corporation, where she addressed many of the organizational issues facing the companies she now advises and trains.

**Not licensed to practice law in North Carolina*

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)
- Member, Multicultural Corporate Compliance Association (MCCA)
- Member, National Public Employment and Labor Relations Association (NPELRA) Speaker's Bureau
- Member, National Diversity Council (NDC)
- Member, Diversity Council Carolinas (DCC)
- Member, Corporate Counsel Women of Color (CCWC)
- Member, Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA)

Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, 2020-2025
- Named, IEL's Top 50 Women Leaders, *International Employment Lawyer*, 2022

Education

LL.B., University of Windsor Faculty of Law, 1996

B.A., McGill University, 1989

Bar Admissions

Ohio
Ontario, Canada

Languages

French

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, 6th Circuit
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio
Court of Appeal for Ontario

Publications & Press

Slurs, Smears, and Stereotypes: Rocky Election Road Ahead

Littler Podcast

August 5, 2024

11th Cir. deals another blow to corporate DEI programs

Legal Dive

June 20, 2024

3 Things To Know As Grant Program For Black Women Halts

Law360 Employment Authority

June 6, 2024

Kentucky Takes Aim at “WOKE” in Higher Ed

Littler ASAP

March 19, 2024

11th Circ. Nix Of Florida's 'Stop WOKE' Act Is A Boost For DEI

Law360 Employment Authority

March 13, 2024

Strike Two... Eleventh Circuit Upholds Injunction Against Florida “Stop-WOKE” Law; Confirms the Law Violates First Amendment

Littler ASAP

March 12, 2024

2nd Circ. Fortifies Employer Defenses Against Attacks On DEI

Law360 Employment Authority

March 11, 2024

Why DEI Doesn't Have to DIE: Employer Considerations for Thriving in a Post-Harvard/UNC Era

Littler Podcast

November 2, 2023

Inching Forward Toward Potential Clarification of Florida's Individual Freedom Act (the "Stop-W.O.K.E." Law)

Littler ASAP

August 28, 2023

Reframing Culture Fit to Avoid Its Dangers

XpertHR

May 23, 2023

Florida's Governor Signs Bill to Defund DEI Initiatives at Colleges

Littler ASAP

May 16, 2023

"Stop-WOKE" Takes Aim at Florida's Colleges and Universities

Littler ASAP

March 16, 2023

Why nepo babies are a problem for America's diversity goals

International Employment Lawyer

February 23, 2023

Employers Can Aid Diversity By Cutting Degree Requirements

Law360 Employment Authority

February 3, 2023

Why employers should beware of fatphobia in the workplace

International Employment Lawyer

January 31, 2023

GC Agenda: January 2023

Practical Law - The Journal

January 31, 2023

N-word ignorance will lead to more conflict and harassment

International Employment Lawyer

October 21, 2022

'Office Housework' Can Make A Legal Mess For Employers

Law360 Employment Authority

September 20, 2022

Can Even Stranger Things Still Happen? Florida is Blocked From Enforcing “Stop-WOKE” Law... For Now

Littler ASAP

August 22, 2022

Florida’s ‘Guilt’ Ban May Squeeze Race Out of Diversity Training

Bloomberg Law

August 2, 2022

U.S. District Court Denies Preliminary Injunction Against Florida “Stop-WOKE” Law

SHRM Online

July 7, 2022

Down But Not Out: U.S. District Court Denies Preliminary Injunction Against Florida “Stop-WOKE” Law

Littler ASAP

June 28, 2022

New Fla. Law Threatens To Upend Workplace Diversity Training

Law360 Employment Authority

May 17, 2022

The Stop WOKE Act may put a ‘strategic pause’ on DEI efforts

HR Dive

May 17, 2022

Inside Track: Employers Walking on Eggshells to Avoid Losing Talent

Law.com

May 5, 2022

Littler Survey: Competitive Talent Market and Pandemic Uncertainty Complicate Return-to-Office Policies

Press Release

May 4, 2022

The Littler Annual Employer Survey 2022

Littler Report

May 4, 2022

Fore! How Golf Can Influence Diversity at Work

SHRM Online

April 28, 2022

“Articulate” As a Compliment? We Need to Talk

Littler Podcast

April 27, 2022

First Lawsuit Against Florida’s “Stop WOKE” Bill Filed

Littler ASAP

April 26, 2022

Florida Limits Permissible Workplace Training on Diversity, Implicit Bias, and Systemic Racism

Littler ASAP

April 22, 2022

Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson is Confirmed as Next SCOTUS Justice

Littler ASAP

April 7, 2022

What’s Golf Got to Do with It? Linking Fairway Sand Traps to Workplace Equity Gaps

Littler Podcast

April 5, 2022

Stop Employees from ‘Mask Shaming’ Colleagues

SHRM Online

April 4, 2022

Florida’s Stop WOKE Act “hijacks” DEI programmes, creating two-tier workplaces

International Employment Lawyer

March 29, 2022

Seismic Workplace Shifts Merit New Anti-Bias Trainings

Law360 Employment Authority

March 16, 2022

Dear Littler: How do we handle “mask shaming” when we return to work?

Dear Littler

March 14, 2022

12 Ways Companies Are Boosting Their DEI

SHRM Online

March 9, 2022

All Rise... For the Move to Boost Diversity on the U.S. Supreme Court

Littler Podcast

March 3, 2022

A New Benchmark for Bench Strength: President Biden Nominates First Black Female to the U.S. Supreme Court

Littler ASAP

February 25, 2022

Guarding Against Guilt: The War on “WOKE”- At Work (Part 2)

Littler Podcast

February 15, 2022

12 Ways Companies Are Boosting Their DEI

Chief Executive Magazine

February 11, 2022

Guarding Against Guilt: The War on “WOKE”- In Context (Part 1)

Littler Podcast

February 8, 2022

As Diversity Awareness Grows, So Too May Discrimination Claims, Employment Lawyers Say

The Legal intelligencer

November 11, 2021

\$10 Million “Reverse” Race & Gender Discrimination Verdict Gives DE&I Programs a Halloween Fright

Littler ASAP

October 29, 2021

Best Lawyers in America© 2022 Edition Honors More Than 240 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 19, 2021

Understaffed Employers Struggle with Vacation Demands

SHRM Online

August 17, 2021

The Littler Annual Employer Survey 2021

Littler Report

May 12, 2021

Littler Survey: Employees Want Remote and Hybrid Work More Than Employers Do

Press Release

May 12, 2021

Questioning the “Diversity Questionnaire”

Littler Podcast

May 11, 2021

Employers Beware: Don’t Leave Zoomers “On Read”!

Littler Podcast

April 13, 2021

Inclusion Interrupted: Charting a Path for Reconnecting, Post-COVID

Littler Podcast

March 18, 2021

AdvisorHub Culture Study Part 5: What Makes an “A” Culture Firm

AdvisorHub

March 11, 2021

Diversity of Thought: Does It Need Rethinking?

Littler Podcast

February 17, 2021

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – The Emerging Chief Attraction in the C-Suite

Littler Podcast

January 27, 2021

4 Ways Virtual Meetings Can Cause Real Legal Problems

Law30

November 13, 2020

Best Lawyers in America© 2021 Edition Honors More Than 250 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 20, 2020

How Employers Should Respond to George Floyd Aftermath

XpertHR

June 24, 2020

The New Call to Action in a COVID-19 Era: The D&I Challenge Ahead for the Legal Industry

Littler Podcast

June 10, 2020

The Other Ugly Virus of 2020: Anti-Asian Bias

Littler Podcast

April 15, 2020

Analysis: Three Men and a Baby Shower

Bloomberg Law

December 20, 2019

Best Lawyers in America© 2020 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers; 14 Named Lawyer of the Year

Press Release

August 15, 2019

Lawyers Are Uniquely Challenging Audience for Anti-Bias Training

Bloomberg Law

May 13, 2019

Dear Littler: Am I the Only GC Who Doesn't Fully Embrace Implicit Bias Training?

Dear Littler

April 22, 2019

What's in a Name? Stamping Out Bias in Employment Screening Processes

Littler Podcast

April 2, 2019

The Incredible Shrinking Woman's Earnings: The Gap is Bigger Than We Thought!

Littler Podcast

December 18, 2018

Bloomberg Law's VIDEO Coverage of the 2018 Littler Executive Employer Conference

Bloomberg Law

May 4, 2018

Dear Littler: Will These Recruiting Ideas Help Me Meet Our Diversity Goals?

Dear Littler

May 2, 2018

Workplace Diversity Under Fire at the Interior Department

SHRM Online

March 27, 2018

“It’s the Culture, Stupid” (Part II): But Companies Cannot Bear the Burden Alone

Littler Podcast

February 20, 2018

“It’s the Culture, Stupid”: Transforming Today’s Sex Scandals into Tomorrow’s Strides for Women at Work

Littler Podcast

January 9, 2018

Diversity Is Under Fire in Charged Political Climate

SHRM Online

November 16, 2017

Affinity Groups – Relevant or Relics?

Littler Podcast

October 3, 2017

The “People of Color” Label: Is It Time To Move The Needle (Again)?

Littler Podcast

August 22, 2017

Diversity Ownership: Does It Really Matter Who’s Running the Show?

Littler Podcast

June 20, 2017

Tackling Culture with Cash: The Dilemma of “Diversity Bonuses”

Littler Podcast

May 16, 2017

Sister Act: How Successful Female Attorneys Balance Life and Law

Littler Podcast

April 13, 2017

Trans-Competence in Healthcare: Emerging Realities for LGBTQ Patients

Littler Podcast

March 21, 2017

The New Administration’s First 30 Days: Is Diversity Necessarily Under Siege in America?

Littler Podcast

February 21, 2017

Diversity & Inclusion at Littler – From the Inside Out

Littler Podcast

February 3, 2017

Workplace Racism Persists, Diversity Training Needed

Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

August 25, 2014

Financial Regulators Propose Workplace Diversity Standards

Littler ASAP

October 25, 2013

Ricci v. DeStefano: Talk About a Rock and a Hard Place: Employers Required to Pick Between Disparate Treatment and Disparate Impact Claims

Littler ASAP

July 10, 2009

EEOC Charges Soar as Economy Sours: What Can Employers Do?

Littler ASAP

April 30, 2009

Littler Mendelson Welcomes Cindy-Ann Thomas to Its Legal Learning Group

Press Release

December 5, 2006

Events & Speaking Engagements

2024 Florida Regional Employer Conference

Orlando, FL

November 14, 2024

Inclusion & Diversity

Littler 7th Annual Conference, Bogota, Colombia

October 19, 2023

Advocating for Inclusion: Insights & Strategies for the 2023 Legislative Session

Schnake Turnbo Frank Inclusion & Diversity Consortium, Keynote Speaker

February 22, 2023

Denver Compliance Coffee Talk Webinar: Getting DE&I Right

Denver, CO

September 1, 2021

Fortifying a Commitment to Inclusive Leadership During – and Beyond – Crisis

2021 Arizona SHRM Virtual Employment Law & Legislative Conference

February 26, 2021

2020 Rocky Mountain Virtual Employer

November 18, 2020

Implicit Bias in the Healthcare Industry: How It's Making Us Sick(er)

July 16, 2020

Diversity at Work: Fortifying Your Inclusion Efforts in the Current Climate

Association of Corporate Counsel - Charlotte Chapter, Charlotte, NC

June 25, 2020

Panelist

The Casetext Advisory Board

June 12, 2020

The Business of Implicit Bias: Moving from Detection to Disruption

Denver, CO

April 17, 2020

2019 Philadelphia Regional Employer Conference

Philadelphia, PA

April 2, 2019

The #MeToo and Times Up Cultural Shift: How to Reduce Disparities in the Workplace

SHRM Diversity & Inclusion Conference and Exposition, Atlanta, GA

October 22, 2018

2018 Ohio Regional Employer Conference

Cleveland, OH

October 18, 2018

Speak Up or Shut Up? The Persisting Challenges of Politics and Discord in the Workplace

Littler Executive Employer, Phoenix, AZ

May 3, 2018

Diversity and Inclusion Summit 2018 - Part 2: The Training Trap: How Efforts to “Fix” Unconscious Bias Are Failing Employers

Littler Executive Employer, Phoenix, AZ

May 2, 2018

Diversity and Inclusion Summit 2018 - Part 1: Should Affinity Groups Come with an Expiry Date?

Littler Executive Employer, Phoenix, AZ

May 2, 2018

From Harvey Weinstein to [Insert Name]: Preventing Harassment in the Workplace and What to Do When Claims are Made

Miami, FL

April 3, 2018

From Harvey Weinstein to [Insert Name]: Preventing Harassment in the Workplace and What to Do When Claims are Made

Charlotte, NC

January 23, 2018

Workplace Diversity: One Very Eventful Year Later

November 14, 2017

Protests, Political Speech, and Public Relations

2017 Mid-Atlantic Employer Conference, Washington, D.C.

June 6, 2017

Women at Work: Attracting, Engaging, and Retaining a Gender-Diverse Workforce a Perspective from the Trenches

Littler, Phoenix, AZ

May 10, 2017

Women at Work: Attracting, Engaging and Retaining a Gender-Diverse Workforce

May 10, 2017

The Why and How of Diversity in the Legal Profession - Panel Discussion

Women in the Profession Conference

May 3, 2017

2017 Littler Global Puerto Rico Conference

San Juan

April 7, 2017

Diversity and Inclusion 2016: Spearheading a Meaningful Initiative That Won't Drive Your General - and Outside - Counsel Crazy!

Association of Corporate Counsel – South Florida Chapter, Fort Lauderdale, FL

October 26, 2016

Where Diversity & Inclusion Meet the Law in 2016: The 6 Essential Strategies That Successful HR Professionals Need NOW!

NCSHRM State Conference, Asheville, NC

September 30, 2016

Conducting Lawful Investigations: An Interactive Program for Internal Investigators

Charlotte, NC

September 13, 2016

Diversity & The Bar: Is it Happy Hour Yet?

Association of Corporate Counsel – Charlotte Chapter, Charlotte, NC

August 16, 2016

Take Command: Lessons in Leadership

The Gray Classic 2016 Business Roundtable

July 14, 2016

Blame the New Workplace! Navigating HR Challenges Created by Workplace 3.0

NCSHRM State Conference, Concord, NC

September 24, 2015

Diversity & Inclusion 2015: Spearheading A Meaningful Initiative That Won't Drive Your General – and Outside – Counsel Crazy!

Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) - Charlotte Chapter, Charlotte, NC

August 18, 2015

Where Diversity & Inclusion Meet the Law: Hot Topics in 2015 for the Healthcare Professional

Carolinas Healthcare Systems Annual Diversity Symposium 2015

April 10, 2015

Practical Strategies and New Opportunities: What Do the Law, Dodd-Frank's Diversity Provision and Workplace Innovation Mean for Diversity and Inclusion?

August 26, 2014

Conducting Lawful Investigations: An Interactive Program for Internal Investigators

Miami, FL

March 13, 2014

Littler's Annual Report on the EEOC: Looking Back and Forward – Successes, Failures and Anticipated Trends

February 5, 2014

Conducting Legal Investigations: An Interactive Program for Internal Investigators

Littler Mendelson, Greensboro, NC

October 9, 2013

Mean Girls (and Boys): The Workplace Bullying Problem

State Conference – North Carolina SHRM, Winston-Salem, NC

October 1, 2013

From the Range to the Workplace: Bullies on the Job

National Training Conference – National Public Employer Labor Relations Association, San Antonio, TX

April 10, 2013

Don't Close Your Eyes or Click Your Heels: Coming to Terms with the Evolving Face of Discrimination

Charlotte, NC

November 9, 2012

Don't Let These Top 5 Employment Trends Spook You

Charlotte, NC

October 25, 2012

Getting Beyond Diversity Day: Developing Meaningful (and Legal) Strategies That Support Your Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Littler Mendelson, Scottsdale, AZ

May 10, 2012

Where Diversity & Inclusion Meet the Law

Diversity Council of the Carolinas, Charlotte, NC

September 22, 2011

Conducting Lawful Investigations: A Practical Skills Primer for Internal HR Professionals

Ohio Provider Resource Association, Cincinnati, OH

February 10, 2011

Finally: Light at the End of the Tunnel?

Annual Diversity Conference – Society for Human Resource Management, New Orleans, LA

October 11, 2010

Diversity in 2010: New Decade, New Dilemmas

8th Annual Diversity Conference – Carolinas Healthcare System, Charlotte, NC

May 7, 2010

Conducting Lawful Investigations: A Practical Skills Primer for Internal HR Professionals

National Training Conference – National Public Employer Labor Relations Association, New Orleans, LA
April 10, 2010

When Harry Met Sally – at Work: The Workplace Dating Game

Annual Training Conference – Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association, Columbus, OH
February 9, 2010

Landmines, Trends and Tools

Charlotte, NC
December 4, 2009

Online Networking: What Every Employer Needs to Know

Charlotte, NC
December 4, 2009

Beyond the Basics: A Mini Boot Camp for Leaders

Fall Training Conference – Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association, Columbus, OH
October 5, 2009

Breaking the Bond Between Discrimination and Retaliation

Annual Training Conference – Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association, Columbus, OH
February 6, 2009

Aligning Mandatory Compliance Training and Diversity Education

October 28, 2008