

LEADING THE WAY
Dennis Kennedy
founded the
National Diversity
Council.



Embracing Diversity

Southwest Airlines supports inclusion and equality at every level.

When Dennis Kennedy's dreams of playing college football didn't go as planned, his mentors helped show him the way to something even greater. In 2004, Kennedy set up shop in his Houston living room to launch the Texas Diversity Council, founding the National Diversity Council (NDC) only four years later. Today, he's a force for inclusion and equality for all, and he's keenly aware of how far he's come since beginning this journey 14 years ago.

The NDC was born of Kennedy's grassroots efforts to promote diversity, inclusion, and equality. He traveled coast-to-coast to states where he had no connections and forged partnerships with organizations and companies seeking diversity. He leveraged his personal resources and relied on the passion of a staff of five. Building the NDC took resilience—something Kennedy learned from struggling with undiagnosed dyslexia in his youth.

After a successful start in Texas, the organization

established state and regional councils across the country. The NDC now maintains a presence in 28 states, has 420 corporate partners, and hosts more than 120 events annually. These events feature notable speakers and sell out across the country. From its Women in Leadership Symposiums to its Diversity Best Practices Luncheons, the NDC's events benefit the corporations and communities it serves.

Today, the NDC is working to certify the next generation of diversity experts through its DiversityFIRST™ certification program, a weeklong seminar for diversity professionals. Kennedy's brainchild has become a key resource for organizations, supporting them through every stage of establishing and executing strong diversity and inclusion initiatives.

The NDC is proud to announce an expanded partnership with Southwest Airlines. In 2018, Southwest became the official airline for the NDC. Through this partnership, the NDC can continue to advocate for diversity and inclusion in all the destinations that Southwest serves.

—Beth Douglass Silcox, National Diversity Council Contributor