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Will we see an "Obama-effect" in private equity?

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BY Becky Yerak | Tribune staff reporter
1:40 PM CDT, April 7, 2009

Will there be a "Barack effect" on the private equity industry?

The question about new [President Barack Obama](#) was one of the more provocative ones raised last Thursday at an Association for Corporate Growth discussion on "How Demographic Shifts and Diversity Affect Private Equity in the 21st Century."

"My prediction is we'll start seeing a wave of Obama-effect deals," Irwin Loud, chief investment officer for Muller & Monroe Asset Management LLC, a Chicago-based private equity firm, told the audience member posing the question. Loud expects a half-foot-high pile of proposed deals involving infrastructure, health-care cost reductions and health-care record keeping.

"Wherever they say they're spending money, PE firms will try to capitalize on that," he said.

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Victor Maruri, Hispania Capital Partners managing director, noted that his Chicago-based private equity firm has an engineering portfolio company that could benefit from stimulus spending.

But another panelist, Venita Fields of Smith Whiley & Co., wondered whether the panel was interpreting the question correctly, or whether they should address minorities' outlook in the private equity industry.

"Hopefully, it'll change the perceptions of people in majority firms," said Fields, senior managing director in [Evanston](#). But while Obama is a "great inspiration,"

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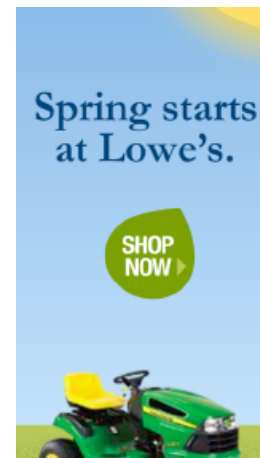


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Fields said ultimately progress must occur at the local level or in recruitment at the college level. Another panelist said the "Barack effect" on the industry might be muted because of the poor

economy.

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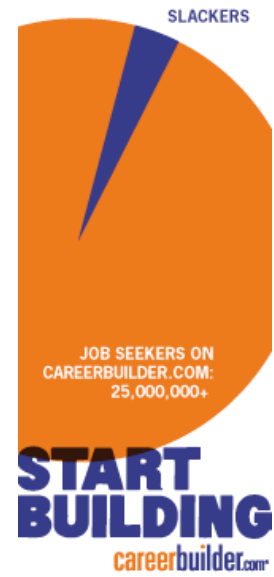
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