

THE ERA OF INCLUSION



Inclusive teams perform better

In terms of time and energy, inclusion is one of the most effective drivers of engagement. Teams that focus on inclusive behaviors are more successful... in a lot of ways.

- People are happier with their jobs and more loyal to colleagues, managers, and the company.
- People are energized and productive.
- The company culture feels good, so morale is high.
- People are creative and innovative, open to fresh ideas.
- Knowledge-sharing works better.
- Diverse skills and perspectives lead to better problem solving.
- Because of all these things, companies and teams are more competitive in the marketplace.

Leaders would be shocked to know the resources that go untapped and the ideas that go undiscovered simply because certain people are consistently excluded from the conversation.

How you communicate is important

Businesses grow strategically; so should communications.

Have a strategy.

Tell a consistent story. Explain the value of diversity and inclusion efforts. Share your action plan.

Be authentic.

Admit that it's a journey. You don't have all the answers now, but you will evolve.

Set goals.

Establish small but public milestones. Spotlight your efforts and accomplishments often.

The reason why we're biased

It's human nature to gravitate toward people who look, think, and act like you. Often, unconsciously and unintentionally, we avoid people who are different. So, our differences become barriers instead of being the assets that they truly are. Race, gender identity, religion, sexual orientation, age, political perspective, and even the differences between introverts and extroverts can foster exclusion. To combat exclusion, understand the barely detectable ways bias sneaks in and activate the counter-behaviors.

Bias sneaks in

First, you gravitate toward people you easily relate to. You typically interact with those who think and act like you.



Counteract with inclusion

Instead, try to interact and grow relationships with people who are different than you.

Next, you become culturally naive. And when you don't understand others' core values, you're more likely to say or do something offensive.



Instead, try to practice cultural curiosity. Search for outside influences. Be aware of and respect differences.

Then, you see the world from one point of view. Surrounded by sameness, you can't understand or empathize with other points of view.



Instead, try to surround yourself with diverse types of people. Seek input from people with differing points of view.

3 inclusive actions your team can start today

Inclusiveness is a cultural trait. It's the actions we take, day in and day out, to nurture and harvest the best ideas from every person on the team.

1 Foster better conversation with face-to-face communication.

- Initiate video instead of phone calls. Visit in-person instead of sending email.
- Schedule team lunches in a common room. It can be informational or social.

2 Form stronger connections. Get to know colleagues professionally *and* personally.

- Go outside your usual circle for input or advice.
- Ask others about their personal lives. If you have kind intentions, most people won't mind sharing.
- Invite a colleague for lunch, coffee, or a walk around the campus.

3 Think twice about who has more access to development opportunities.

- Delegate new responsibilities to the less familiar choice, so others are exposed to development opportunities.
- Keep in mind that having lower expectations for some, can negatively influence their performance.