

A 2020 Diversity Roadmap

*Three less-traveled
routes to navigate
through organizational
obstacles to diversity
and inclusion*

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Executive Overview

In spite of organizational commitment to diversity and inclusion, progress is slow. While awareness concerning the importance of diversity, especially when it comes to protected classes such as: race, age, gender and sexual orientation has been rising over the past decade, industry still has a long way to go to convert diversity awareness and intention into outcomes. (p4)

Cognitive diversity, the different styles of thinking, mental frameworks, and lenses with which people see the world, is another important form of bias that must also be understood. People and even whole groups/departments can easily be “excluded” because of their thinking styles. (p5)

The challenges of diversity are made more complex by the fact that *covert bias* is influenced by our hidden neurological wiring which causes us to put people in categories – in a box, and place that box on a shelf denoting value. *Boxing & Shelving* obscures the view of the person’s true value and causes leaders to unconsciously exclude people they’ve placed on a lower shelf, thus making it difficult for them to make valuable contributions. (p6)

This paper unpacks three routes organizations can take to overcome diversity obstacles:



Route 1: Map the Obstacles to Diversity and Inclusion; understand the roadblocks and what propels resistance in one’s own organization (p8)



Route 2: Broadcast the Business Value of Diversity; ensure that each level of your workforce recognizes the business value of diversity and its potential impact on innovation, problem solving & profitability (p11)



Route 3: Infuse Diversity-Driven Innovation into Everyday Business; Embed critical group activities such as strategy development and business planning with diversity-driven innovation and problem solving so that valuing diversity and practicing inclusion becomes a habit within the business (p14)

The practice of diversity-driven innovation must be supported by organizational systems such as hiring, performance management, development, promotion and compensation. (p17)

“Diversity without inclusion is useless.

Janice Gassam,
Senior Contributor/Diversity & Inclusion,
Forbes

“We can push down, hold back or shut out people who are different, or we can value their diverse presence as the most extraordinary business asset we have.

Bruce Fern, President, Change-Ready Solutions

A 2020 Diversity Roadmap: *Three less-traveled routes to navigate through organizational obstacles to diversity and inclusion*

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A 2020 Diversity Roadmap: Three less-traveled routes to navigate through organizational obstacles to diversity and inclusion

How we got here

Diversity is at the top of the agenda for many C-Suite leaders and featured as the current *hot topic* in much business literature. Likewise, many organizations have publicly broadcast their commitment to diversity, with over two-thirds of executives rating diversity and inclusion as an important issueⁱ. The focus on diversity, such as women in leadership, continues to expandⁱⁱ propelled by factors such as rapidly changing societal standards and demands for healthier diversity scorecards.

Though many businesses take the diversity pledge, *organizational barriers* impede the execution of well-intentioned diversity efforts, resulting in a lack of measurable D&I progress. Resistance can take the form of overt pushback, but in today's business climate in which no one wants to be viewed as openly discriminating, it often manifests as *stealth resistance*; indifference to diversity gaps, quiet withdrawal of support for progressive inclusion efforts, or claims of higher competing priorities.

In this light, this paper describes several diversity difficulties and defines three non-traditional paths that organizations can take to navigate through organizational obstacles to enhanced diversity and inclusion.

A dishonorable discrepancy

In spite of increasing verbal commitments and in some cases significant financial investments in diversity, many organizations report a lack of progress in diversity along with unsatisfactory diversity gaps. A 2019 article from Time stated that "While business targeting diversity is flourishing, diversity is not."ⁱⁱⁱ It's akin to the proverbial hamster running hard but going nowhere.

Few businesses claim that they have mastered the diversity challenge, and this disparity is supported by sobering facts. For example, Time reported:

In terms of Race:

- People of color who make up nearly 40% of the U.S. population—remain acutely underrepresented in most influential fields. This is exemplified by the fact that from 2009 to 2018 the percentage of black law partners barely inched up from 1.7% to 1.8%
- People of color held about 16% of Fortune 500 board seats in 2018
- A 2018 survey of the 15 largest public fashion and apparel companies found that nonwhites held only 11% of board seats and that nearly 75% of company CEOs were white men

Age^{iv}:

- 44% of people report they have observed age discrimination in the workplace
- 25% of people fear being pushed out at work because of their age
- Over 50% of people report that they have heard a co-worker make a negative remark about another employee related to age
- Age discrimination is recognized by the World Health Organization as a "prevalent and insidious problem" that can act as a dangerous employment discrimination tactic, even if it's unintentional

Gender:

- Women make up only 22% of top executives in North America and Canada^v
- There is a gender wage gap in 97% of occupations^{vi} and women are paid, on average, 80 cents on the dollar of their male colleagues^{vii}
- Women of color make up 18% of the workforce but comprise a mere 4% of the C-Suite^{viii}
- Among the greatest challenges are what has been referred to as the "broken rung", the difficulty women have moving up the ladder into management roles

- Over the last five years, there has been less than a 5% improvement in women's representation in management, with women of color having even more of a barrier to advancement^{ix}

Case in point, all you have to do is to look into the hallways of many Silicon Valley businesses and the blatant absence of women, Latino and black engineers is all too evident.

Overt as well as unconscious bias is prevalent at large in the US, so one might be tempted to leave the problem to government leaders and sociologists. However, investors and stakeholders expect those of us in business to *operate according to a higher order; an order in which we put aside biased beliefs and actions that interfere with optimal organizational performance.*

On the plus side, awareness concerning the importance of diversity has been rising over the past decade, as has new research that reveals formally unrecognized equity gaps. Nevertheless, we still have a long way to go to convert awareness and intention into outcomes.

A less visible dilemma, diversity beyond face

Face refers to race, gender, color, age, sexual orientation and other standard diversity characteristics represented by the protected classes. While there is much to be

done to eliminate bias and discrimination in these domains, there is another form of bias that must also be understood. *Cognitive diversity* represents *the* different styles of thinking, mental frameworks, and lenses with which people see the world. Well known personality assessments such as Myers-Briggs and The Managerial Grid, derived from Carl Jung's original theories on personality styles, have been used for decades to address cognitive differences, although rarely formally associated with diversity efforts.

Cognitive style differences can be measured and analyzed and are in fact at the root of many personality conflicts. People can easily be "excluded" because of the way they think. Accusations from the excluder can sound like "she's so analytical and slows us down", or "he's always rushing to get things done without thinking through all of the options". Instead of *valuing these differing styles*, less informed leaders use these differences to exclude people. People tend to involve others with whom they are comfortable – people more like them, whatever the style, even when the outcome is less effective than involving others who think differently.^x

In light of this, even though cognitive diversity adds another layer of complexity to the already intricate biases which organizations must deal with, it must not be overlooked.

Understanding Covert Bias: Boxing & Shelving

It's helpful to consider unconscious bias as being *covert bias*; covert as in operating in the shadows, due in part to our hidden neurological wiring.

Boxing: The prehistoric parts of our brains, particularly the amygdala, automatically put people in categories – in *boxes*, such as man or woman, young or old, black or white, fit or unfit, gay or straight, etc. And our brains can make associations with these boxes such as young = too inexperienced; and old = too slow.

Shelving: Our brains then put the box on a *shelf*, denoting value. The lower shelves are reserved for people who are perceived as being of less value, different, and therefore potentially risky, and they belong "outside my circle". The upper shelves are reserved for people who are like me, somehow good, or valuable, in my inner circle, my "go to people". And the brain, specifically the RAS (reticular activating system), filters out data that is inconsistent with our fixed views of these people: "How could that kid have said something so insightful. He has no experience. He must have heard someone else say it", thus perpetuating the covert bias.

Boxing & Shelving can have insidious effects on the beliefs and actions of managers.

Often without realizing it, based on covert biases, managers give others more or less support, feedback, coaching and resources. (See table below) This in turn leads to the *Self-Fulfilling Prophecy* in which one's negative beliefs about a person (or a group) influences

their actions. Unfortunately, all too often, those actions turn those negative expectations into reality.^{xi} Consequently, if a leader deeply believes that an employee will make no contributions of value, over time, it will probably become true.

Beliefs about Others Influences Behavior

	People Inside the Circle	People Outside the Circle
1. Time	▪ Give them more time	▪ Give them less time
2. Information	▪ Share more information	▪ Share less information
3. Feedback	▪ Give more and better feedback	▪ Tend to give less quality feedback
4. Resources	▪ Informally share more resources	▪ Informally share fewer resources
5. Opinions	▪ Ask for opinions more often	▪ Don't value their opinions
6. Decisions	▪ Involve in decision-making	▪ Often left out of decision-making
7. Value	▪ Praise them more often	▪ Value them less

One of the consequences of *Boxing & Shelving* is that it creates *filters* which obscure the leader's true view of others. It interferes with their ability to make an objective determination about how a person might best contribute in various work situations. *Boxing & Shelving* is less about being a poor leader and more about the opportunity to be more mindful of covert biases and how they affect perceptions and actions which may undermine team and individual performance.

One of the greatest crimes someone can commit is not only to box and shelve others but to *box and shelve themselves*. Engaging in undue self-criticism and negative self-talk makes leaders withdraw instead of lean in, creates self-doubt instead of fueling confidence, and cultivates self-limiting beliefs that cause a leader to try to fit in versus leverage the most unique aspects of themselves.

2020 Diversity Roadmap

There are three routes that enable organizations to navigate through obstacles to diversity and inclusion. They are:

Route 2 – Broadcast the Business Value of Diversity

Route 3 - Infuse Diversity-Driven Innovation into Everyday Business

Route 1 – Map the Obstacles to Diversity and Inclusion



1. MAP THE OBSTACLES TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In the same way that you would not begin a great journey through complex terrain without identifying potential danger zones, organizations must first understand the obstacles and areas of organizational resistance to diversity and inclusion. Below are common obstacles and contributors to resistance, some institutional and others personal.

10 Obstacles to Diversity and Inclusion

OBSTACLE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE
<p>1. Treating diversity as a numbers game</p> 	<p>Organizations focus on what they can measure, such as quantitative targets for increasing the number of women in management positions. However, all too often, these numbers capture one narrow aspect of D&I and lose sight of higher-level objectives such as ensuring everyone has equal opportunity for development and advancement.</p>	<p>Board Comment: <i>"We increased the number of black females we hired last year. That's good, right?"</i></p>
<p>2. Ownership challenges</p> 	<p>If you were to stop people in the hallways and ask, "Who are the diversity people?", they might point you to the Chief Diversity Officer or HR office. It's only when everyone in the halls answers, "We are all the diversity people!" that organizations can begin to sincerely embrace D&I.</p>	<p>Manager: <i>"I admit there are mostly older white guys on our team, but that's a problem for HR to solve."</i></p>

<p>3. Unconscious bias at the neurological level</p> 	<p>Since the processes that direct bias are covert and neurologically driven, simply telling leaders to “stop being biased” is insufficient.</p>	<p>Middle Manager: <i>"I know she's smart, but I'm uncomfortable sending a 26-year-old female to represent us at a meeting with the CEO."</i></p>
<p>4. Competing business priorities^{xii}</p> 	<p>Employees at all levels ask, “How will my performance be measured?” When achieving business goals trumps everything else, other concerns drop to the lower rungs of the ladder. It’s only when diversity is viewed as a non-negotiable standard of performance that it will be of equal priority with business objectives.</p>	<p>Manager: <i>"When I asked my boss about the criteria for promotion to VP, he said, 'You know; it's all about how your team did on your goals.'"</i></p>
<p>5. Comfort and rapport</p> 	<p>People have a natural rapport with others like themselves based on how they speak, their values, the schools they went to, etc. For example, people of a similar age, rank, gender, or nationality tend to sit together during lunch. Helping people to operate beyond their comfort circles takes time and effort.</p>	<p>Peer Manager: <i>"I just promoted Ben. He went to my alma mater, we both played rugby, and he knows many of my former professors. I trust him and we work well together."</i></p>
<p>6. The legacy stories people tell</p> 	<p>Stories about company heroes and legendary accomplishments are strong influencers of institutional culture, but they might unintentionally reinforce bias. Do these stories create pictures that reduce the likelihood that diverse people will be held in high standing?</p>	<p>Manager: <i>"We need more people like Joe! He's a rock star. He has single-handedly closed more business deals than anyone else and he did it while golfing at his exclusive club!"</i></p>
<p>7. Lack of clarity on what to do vs. what not to do</p> 	<p>D&I has traditionally focused on what not to do; don't discriminate, don't make derogatory comments about others, etc. In many organizations, there is confusion about the <i>positive proactive</i> actions managers should take to support D&I.</p>	<p>Team Leader: <i>"I'm all for diversity and inclusion, but what am I as a team leader supposed to do about that; involve people in projects they're not qualified for?"</i></p>

<p>8. Insufficient D&I resources</p> 	<p>Even when the right actions are planned, efforts to transform an organization's diversity culture and behavior can be inadequately resourced.</p>	<p>Chief Diversity Officer: <i>"Sure, I'm the CDO but with a team of two and a workforce of 5,000 and limited budget and no authority, how much can I be expected to do?"</i></p>
<p>9. Overt discrimination</p> 	<p>Sometimes overt discrimination is only expressed to others who are sympathetic to a biased point of view. Whether broadcasted openly or said in whispers, if it exists, a plan must be developed to address overt discrimination head on.</p>	<p>Peer: <i>"Becca I'm surprised our boss hired you given the way he talks about women."</i></p>
<p>10. Institutional bias</p> 	<p>Sometimes organizations harbor unspoken bias and Box and Shelve an entire category of people. This institutional bias may be covert but nevertheless a significant contributor to diversity resistance. This is exacerbated when that same bias has contributed to a scarcity of diversity role models in exemplary positions.</p>	<p>Department Chief: <i>"Women simply don't make good leaders in law enforcement. Show me some. We don't have them."</i></p>

These obstacles may carry different weights in different organizations. It's up to each organization's leadership to prioritize the most relevant for their business.

Routes 2 and 3 below define an effective path for accelerating progress in diversity and inclusion.



2. BROADCAST THE BUSINESS VALUE OF DIVERSITY

Measurable value

The challenges of increasing diversity become all the more puzzling when it has been clear for years that “diversity is good business”. As much as 20 years ago, business and research journals began to report on the business value of diversity, shifting D&I beyond the realm of the CHRO and into the boardroom.

Examples of measurable business benefits of diversity include:

- Diversity and inclusion results in *higher levels of company performance*^{xiii}
- Firms with more ethnic and racial diversity in management are **35%** more likely to have returns above the industry mean
- Firms with greater diversity have greater *access to new market segments*^{xiv,xv} and are **45%** likelier to *grow market share* over the previous year
- Inclusion leads to *higher levels of company performance*^{xvi} based on research specifically indicating that inclusive cultures are^{xvii}:

- **2X** more likely to achieve financial targets
- **3X** more likely to be high performing
- **8X** more likely to achieve better business results

The correlations between diversity and business performance are so compelling that it obliges us to ask, why? Why do more diverse businesses outperform less diverse businesses? What is the *causal relationship* between diversity and business outcomes?

One hypothesis is that *diverse organizations perform better because they think more divergently, see more broadly and deeply, and solve problems and innovate more effectively*. Lo and behold, the data overwhelmingly supports this:

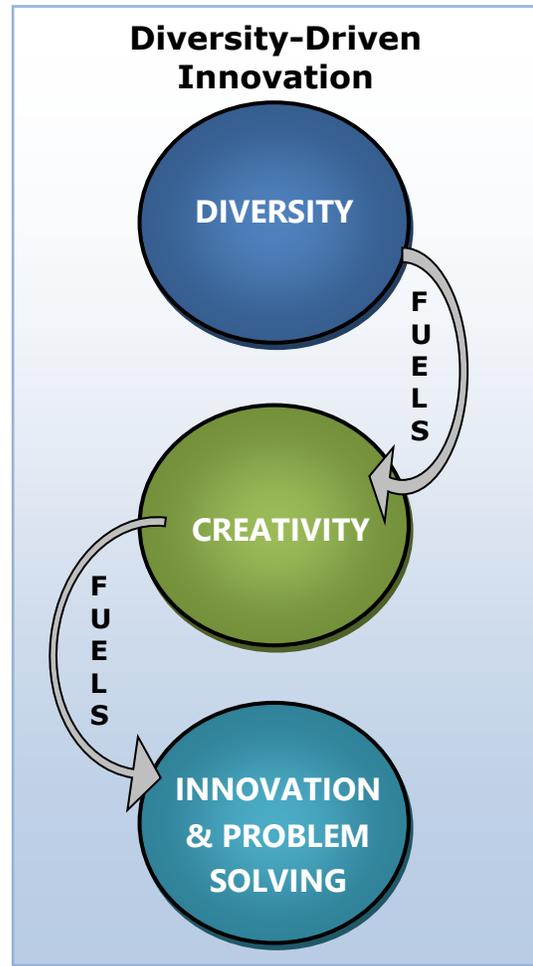
- More diverse organizations are **6X** more likely to be innovative^{xviii}
- Companies with *more women* were more likely to introduce *radical new innovations* into the market over a two-year period^{xix}
- Businesses run by *culturally diverse leadership teams* were more likely to develop new products^{xx}
- *Firms with more ethnic and racial diversity* in management have **2X** the *innovation revenue* versus companies with

below average diversity in management^{xxi}

Not only do more diverse organizations develop disruptive innovations more frequently, they also *solve day-to-day business problems* more effectively by leveraging divergent thinking. The result is increased employee engagement and discretionary effort; reduced costs, time saved, and streamlined operations all of which contribute to increased profitability. To help distinguish between the types of innovation, innovation pundits call the form of everyday improvement “little i” and the major innovations, “BIG I”.

The organizational value of greater diverse thinking is akin to the value of *investment diversification*. Greater portfolio diversification equates with reduced risk and increased opportunities to take advantage of shifting market conditions, short and long-term. Greater *workforce diversification* also translates into increased opportunities to take advantage of *more diverse thinking* in varying business scenarios.

The research validates that in order to drive sustainable growth, businesses must recognize that *diversity fuels creativity, and creativity fuels innovation*. Then they must *learn how to harness the power of diversity to level up innovation and problem solving*. This is *Diversity-Driven Innovation*.



Innovation needs innovating
Innovation is highly desired with 84% of executives agreeing that innovation is vital to their growth strategy^{xxii}. Nevertheless, significant innovation gaps remain:

- Only 6% of those same executives are satisfied with their company’s innovation performance.^{xxiii}
- Achieving high levels of innovation is difficult for a company in any given year, and remarkably difficult to sustain over time^{xxiv}

- Innovative thinking does not come naturally to most people. We are efficient, reflexive thinkers who seek to confirm what we already know. When we are on autopilot, we are confirmation machines, not innovation machines^{xxv}

Given the importance of innovation, along with the unfulfilled expectations of leaders and the significant need from the team to enterprise level, innovation stands out as the perfect target for leveraging diversity to enhance performance.

And yet, when leaders Box and Shelve others as being “less valued” non-contributors, it *obscures their vision* to the possibilities of what that employee or group might contribute to innovative solution development.

To increase innovation and optimize problem solving, the best leaders focus on the *Spark of Humanity* in each member of their team. They look for this spark within and also beyond their direct reports. This spark is the source of creativity and that which connects us as human beings, the *unity in diversity*. It's the spark behind passion and drive. It's that which makes each of us unique and animates our talents which can be a treasure house for solution development. When leaders learn how to zoom in and focus on this spark instead of less relevant factors such as race, gender, age, color or cognitive style, employees in turn know they are valued and respond by bringing new levels of innovation and problem resolution to the business.



3. INFUSE DIVERSITY-DRIVEN INNOVATION INTO EVERYDAY BUSINESS

Diversity and Inclusion; a theme of good but not good enough

Many organizations take actions to evolve their culture which appear to make sense on their own but do not go far enough in solving a problem. For example, IBM, in their classic study on Making Change Work^{xxvi}, found that organizations take positive action to implement change, but all too often do not go far enough to affect a sustainable difference.

Likewise, many organizations take action to improve diversity, but must ask if the action alone is sufficient, such as:

Conventional Action 1 – Developing and implementing a strong Diversity Policy – This is an important and required step in the diversity journey, but most organizational experts will tell you that *simply having a policy in place is not enough* to affect deep change.

Conventional Action 2 - Increasing diversity through hiring. Many organizations that have a clear diversity policy seek to go farther to improve diversity by hiring more diverse employees. This is a sound strategy. However, *diversity hiring alone is not enough.*

An organization can have more diverse people who are nevertheless neither involved nor included. As one diversity guru said, “diversity without inclusion is useless.”^{xxvii}

Conventional Action 3 - Increasing inclusion. It is most advantageous to leverage diversity by including diverse people in decision making, innovation and problem solving. However, *increasing inclusion alone is not enough.* All employees, at all levels must feel respected and valued. If people are included in key meetings but experience that their contributions are not welcome, then inclusion is for naught. A sense of equity and voice for diverse people is vital to gain the benefit of inclusion.

Misan Sagay, a black filmmaker and member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, says “More attention also must be paid to what happens once people of color are hired. A lot of the times they want our physical presence but not our voice.” This thinking is exemplified when organizations encourage inclusion practices but still have lower than desired diversity retention rates. For example, though improving, Google continues to struggle to retain diverse talent with the highest attrition being among African American employees.^{xxviii}

This can happen particularly when diverse hires experience *unmet promises* of a culture in which they feel valued and respected.

Conventional Action 4 – Conduct training on unconscious bias and inclusion. Training represents a key piece in solving the diversity puzzle and many organizations attempt to remedy their diversity difficulties by providing a training program on removing unconscious bias. While important, *training alone is usually not enough.* Much diversity training *only has a short-term effect* which wears off quickly when participants return back to their demanding jobs. Furthermore, leaders in particular must be taught to manage an environment that is bias-free and values all people.

In order to leap beyond the obstacles and overcome resistance to diversity and inclusion, a new approach is required.

INFUSION; A new approach to overcoming organizational resistance to diversity

Infusion definition: the act of saturating a person or object with a certain element or quality. In medicine, infusion therapy is prescribed when a patient's condition is resisting traditional drug delivery mechanisms such as in taking oral medications.

Infusion therapy is sometimes used with strains of *antibiotic resistant* infections or when the patient needs an *accelerated transfusion*.

In order to build an environment in which diversity is cherished, inclusion is a habit, and people are valued and respected for their actual or potential contributions, diversity-driven innovation and problem solving must be **radically infused into the organization**. It's essential *that diversity-driven innovation and problem solving be woven into the fabric of the business, from team to enterprise, so that it becomes a part of how everyone does business, every day.*

Diversity-driven innovation can be distilled into four simple principles for infusion, characterized by the acronym PACE:

- P**ut diverse players in the game
- A**uthorize safety zones
- C**larify coworker uniqueness
- E**valuate the business impact of diversity-driven innovation

This *inclusion infusion solution* is best administered to those *critical business challenges* that the business faces regularly.

Though there are many, three *Critical Innovation Opportunities* – CIOs – stand out during which divergent thinking can be leveraged for greater innovation, problem solving and collaboration:

1. **Innovation Meetings** such as product and service innovation, design thinking, technology innovation and digital transformation sessions
2. **Business Improvement Discussions** such as six sigma, continuous improvement, customer experience management and agile sessions
3. **Strategy and Planning Sessions** such as business strategy development, department planning sessions, and sales strategy/planning sessions

During CIOs, a focus on the PACE inclusion infusion solution paves the road to making diversity-driven innovation the norm for an organization. This can be done through *diversity-driven meeting management*:

A. **Before the meeting, arrange to “put diverse players in the game” and “clarify coworker uniqueness”:**

- *Consider the diverse and unique perspectives as well as different skill sets that will bring value to the discussion*

and include people who represent those viewpoints

- *Look within and beyond your own department and outside the four walls of your company when appropriate*
- *Develop and share ground rules that help everyone value diverse and divergent contributions*

The goal is to make meeting participants feel valued, respected and welcome in advance. This sets expectations around collaboration and inclusive participation.

B. **During the meeting, “authorize safety zones” and leverage “coworker uniqueness”:**

- *Create a safe space for divergent and even unpopular ideas*
- *Manage participation so there is a balance of contributions*
- *Ask people for their diverse perspectives derived from what makes them unique*

The goal is to tap into *uniqueness of voice* by making everyone feel valued, respected and welcome throughout the meeting. This brings diversity-driven innovation to life.

C. **After the meeting:**

- *Develop a plan to “evaluate impact”*

- *Communicate appreciation* to meeting participants
- *Point out how ideas that were not used helped to open up thinking and might be leveraged* elsewhere in the business

One significant benefit of this approach is that it *doesn't take extra time* out of everyone's overloaded day, but instead provides a better way of doing what they would otherwise do; just more effectively.

Climate care

When a patient has a serious illness, even with the best surgery and medication routine, they still need to maintain the proper amount of rest and right diet to recover. Likewise, in order to result in sustaining results, the organization must take such actions as:

- Build diversity-driven *performance expectations* into the performance management system
- *Hire* to diversity and inclusion expectations, especially for management roles
- *Ensure compensation is impacted* by performance against those standards
- Promote to higher levels *only those who exemplify valuing diversity and inclusion*
- Ensure *that consistent messaging from leadership* at

all levels reinforces diversity, inclusion and equity

- *Make these expectations clear* to every business and employees of supply chain partners
- Ensure that *the customer experience is consistent* with the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion

Outcomes

When organizations create the right climate and lead group activities this way, the result is:

- ✓ The organization places greater value on diversity and *inclusive innovation* becomes a habit
- ✓ Increased opportunity to *more effectively innovate* products and services, setting the business up to *grow financial returns*
- ✓ The organization can more effectively *resolve productivity hurdles*, thus reducing unproductive drains on the business
- ✓ Employees, diverse and otherwise, feel valued, heard, respected, and engaged, increasing the likelihood of talent retention
- ✓ Teams develop a *higher standard of communications*, positioning the organization to more effectively attract/develop top talent
- ✓ Leaders have measurable ways of demonstrating a commitment to diversity

Closing

The world of work is evolving. Sometimes we take a few steps in reverse before moving forward, but overall, we appear to be operating at higher levels of consciousness about how to work with our people resources.

In the areas of diversity, even countries bound by strict rules and precepts such as China are evolving. For example, Darius Longarino Esq., Senior Fellow at the Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center is working with Chinese LGBTQ citizens and advocates as they speak out against discrimination, conversion therapy and prejudice particularly in China's mental health industry.

In December 2019, Darius tweeted "Today, a China National People's Congress spokesperson stated that writing gay marriage into the Civil Code was among the issues (on which) they received public feedback. The mere acknowledgment of the topic has caused mass online celebration." If

China can challenge its own thinking on LGBTQ issues in the mental health industry, cannot the corporate world more successfully deal with bias and see the vast value of diversity? We will when industry learns to:

- ✓ Infuse D&I into everyday business
- ✓ Drive action by presenting "what to do" solutions verses touting "what not to do" proclamations that paralyze action
- ✓ Create a system that leverages diversity and divergent thinking to fuel innovation and problem-solving

This paper has described new ways of tackling this ageless challenge and operationalizing diversity-driven innovation to fuel a vision for a brighter, more enthusiastically diverse world of work.

About Change-Ready Solutions

Change-Ready Solutions is a specialized training and management consulting firm that helps businesses leverage diversity to lead, change and grow:

- Training for managers and meeting facilitators to leverage diversity for greater innovation and problem solving
- Consulting to diversity teams to integrate D&I into everyday business activities



BRUCE N. FERN, M.Ed.

Bruce N. Fern is the founder and president of Change-Ready Solutions. His background is in the behavioral sciences which he applies to all of Change-Ready Solution's business solutions. He's an accomplished business leader who helps organizations transform client-facing practices (sales optimization) and internal business practices (leadership, culture, change management, and talent engagement/retention).

Bruce was a leader in IBM's external consulting Talent & Change Global Center of Excellence and was the corporate VP in charge of agency leadership development for New York Life. Before that, Bruce founded and led for 15 years Performance Connections International Inc, a training and consulting firm specializing in employee engagement, talent retention, sales, service and leadership development. Before that, Bruce was the Executive Vice President of Consulting at MOHR/Blessing White, one of the nation's leading professional development companies.



NATALIE JENKINS

Natalie Jenkins has been a distinguished leader for over 20 years in providing consulting and training services to businesses to support organizational transformation. Natalie has enabled fortune 500 and non-profit enterprises alike to build productive, diverse and healthy employee cultures that drive long-term business results.

Previously, Natalie was one of the leaders of the start-up team at Waggl which provides a disruptive technology-driven continuous listening platform to market. Prior to Waggl, she was the Director of Strategic Innovation at New & Improved, a leading innovation and problem-solving training and consulting firm. Before New & Improved, Natalie was one of the founding members of the team that created Innova, then the exclusive U.S. distributor and global leader of training programs based on the work of creative thinking guru, Edward de Bono.

For questions about how to bring these strategies to your organization, please reach out to:



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Bruce Fern, President, Change-Ready Solutions

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