HACKING D&I

How to leverage Diversity & Inclusion
to improve talent-strategies, culture and performance.

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INCLUSIVELY**

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1. Introduction

For years, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) work was primarily motivated by compliance concerns and seen as a necessary evil, at best. However, recent shifts in social climate have brought to light the fact that diversity and inclusion is an economic imperative. Top talent is becoming increasingly discriminating and savvy in selecting their place of work, and companies are catching on to the fact that they need to do more in order to remain competitive in the market and effectively recruit, retain, and advance a diverse workforce.

In fact, there are nine key diversity and inclusion pain points that companies tend to experience, and it is these areas that this white paper is intended to address. Relative to Talent: recruitment, engagement, and advancement of diverse talent. Relative to Culture: transformation, leadership, and innovation. And finally, relative to Risk: complaints, attrition, and brand reputation.

The information contained in this document is a repository of available research and experience of over 20 years working in this industry, observing companies making the same mistakes time and again. With this resource in hand, leaders will be well equipped to address all of the key D&I issues that may arise within an organization. Every leader has the ability to help promote a culture of inclusion within their organizations, regardless of their title or position.

2. About Lead Inclusively, Inc.

Lead Inclusively, Inc. is a global diversity & inclusion consulting firm that uses world-class technology and machine learning solutions to create culture transformation at scale. Using proprietary assessments, learning and technology products specifically developed to drive tangible business and organizational results for global companies, Lead Inclusively has achieved unprecedented client results by leveraging diversity & inclusion initiatives to impact metrics in innovation, employee engagement, team productivity and employee satisfaction. The firm was founded by Denise Pirrotti Hummel, J.D., who formerly founded global cross-culture consultancy Universal Consensus, LLC., which was acquired by Ernst & Young, LLC. The Lead Inclusively team has been touted by global enterprise leaders as the "firm to watch for next

practices in diversity & inclusion; the consultancy anticipated to be the D&I benchmark for inclusion and gender parity worldwide." CEO Denise Hummel has been endorsed as "the world's leader in diversity and inclusion." The firm is based in southern California and serves clients around the world.

3. The Lead Inclusively Approach

Lead Inclusively, Inc. uses technology solutions and a consultative approach to drive business results through the power of inclusion, using its FSM Methodology™, (Focus, Strategize, Measure). The Lead Inclusively approach to diversity and inclusion begins with a "focus" on the core of the impact, takes action that is "strategically" calculated to yield intended business results and "measures" what matters. As a result, Lead Inclusively, Inc. provides powerful business impact to companies willing to approach D&I as a strategic initiative defined by specific business goals and KPIs.

Because the firm leverages Diversity & Inclusion initiatives to accelerate business performance, Lead Inclusively's engagements are focused on increasing the ability to recruit, retain and advance diverse talent, increase employee engagement for all, and empower the diverse ideation that fuels innovation and business performance. This happens through a process called AEA (Assess, Educate, Apply), which begins with an Assessment of the critical behaviors at the intersection of inclusion and innovation. When that foundation is laid, Educate through fully scalable learning & development solutions that move leaders and the entire workforce from unconscious bias to inclusive behaviors that create an organizational culture shift. Lastly, the change is applied, scaled & sustained through a behavior change app or virtual inclusion coach. The result is an organizational culture shift to inclusion that is real and lasting.

D&I Initiatives can only be optimized for success over time if metrics are tracked relative to organizational and individual baselines. These baselines may be in any category from hiring of diverse candidates to leadership standards and values. Lead Inclusively does not look merely at demographics and diversity numbers; rather, the emphasis is on measuring key areas where the talent pipeline is leaking in a very granular manner. Lead Inclusively also measure the ability of leaders to utilize Lead Inclusively's 3Rs of Inclusion™ (broadly categorized as Receptive, Reflective and Revitalizing) so that organizations can continue their measurable transformation to an inclusion culture, which leverages inclusion achieve business KPIs.

4. Why Diversity & Inclusion Issues Arise

Recruiting, retaining, and advancing diverse talent is a concern for many leaders who recognize diversity and inclusion (D&I) as keys to innovation, engagement, and performance. However, it is also a common weakness within companies. Bringing diverse talent into the organization can be a challenge for a number of reasons, but there are three appear most commonly:
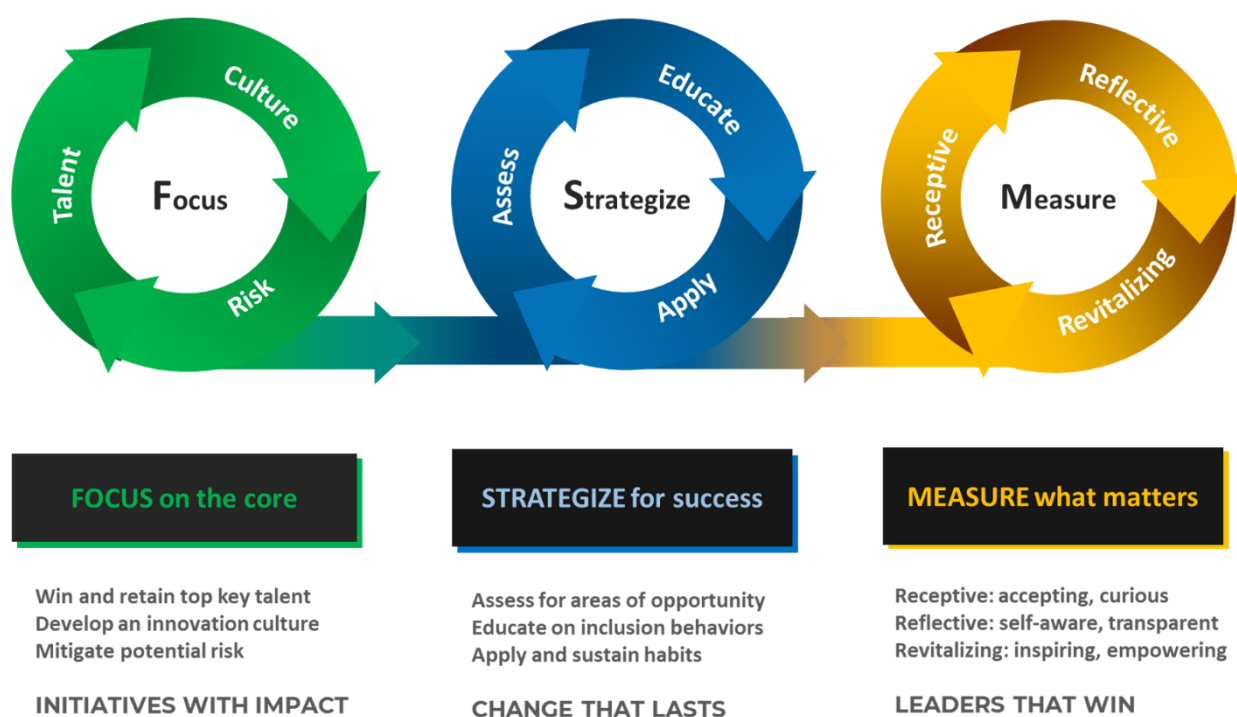
1. **Lack of Assessment.** Many organizations see the value in diversity and inclusion, but make the mistake of attempting to address the issues through one-off activities or initiatives that do not have strategic value. For example, a company that has an Asian-American Affinity Group (or Employee Resource Group) and celebrates Chinese New Year is not engaging in activities that will drive bottom line value for the organization through diversity and inclusion.

2. **Lack of scalable and strategic education.** Often, diversity and inclusion education is not offered at all, or is offered only to senior leaders, or is offered in the form of unconscious bias training, which has been shown to be ineffective over time, Education around diversity and inclusion should be targeted to drive business results by a focus on inclusive behaviors, rather than simply unconscious bias.

3. **Lack of educational sustainability.** As with all training, it is easy to for busy leaders to forget diversity and inclusion principles and go back to old habits. To date, it has been very difficult for companies to reinforce meaningful inclusion habits over time. As a result, diversity and inclusion training does not tend to have long-term business results. Lead Inclusively prioritizes sustainability activities that build habits of inclusive behaviors in order to impact organizations long-term.

Many companies haven't yet realized that unconscious bias can creep into talent processes, from hiring to advancement in a number of ways. We've seen performance review forms that were almost tailor-made to invite bias. It's unintentional but happens so easily. One benefit of bringing in an unbiased third-party consultation is that a company can quickly see things internal employees have gotten used to.

5. Lead Inclusively's Proven Process (FSM™)

This detailed process succeeds because it places the focus on critical business areas (Focus on TCR), it is strategic in the approach (AEA) towards leadership development and organizational transformation, and it measures what matters (the 3Rs of Inclusion™):

- **Focus** on the Core: TCR Focus (Talent, Culture, Risk)

- Take **Strategic** Action: Assess, Educate Apply Strategy

- **Measure** What Matters: Lead Inclusively's 3Rs of Inclusion™ are the critical behaviors at the intersection of inclusion and innovation

FOCUS on the core

Win and retain top key talent
Develop an innovation culture
Mitigate potential risk

INITIATIVES WITH IMPACT

STRATEGIZE for success

Assess for areas of opportunity
Educate on inclusion behaviors
Apply and sustain habits

CHANGE THAT LASTS

MEASURE what matters

Receptive: accepting, curious
Reflective: self-aware, transparent
Revitalizing: inspiring, empowering

LEADERS THAT WIN

Lead Inclusively's FSM Methodology™

I. Focus on the Core (TCR™)

In order to have a successful inclusion culture transformation, three focus areas must be considered: Talent, Culture and Risk. Each of these three focus areas have their own three primary components:

1. Talent is comprised of: Recruitment, Engagement, and Advancement.

a. Recruitment: organizations often suffer in their ability to attract diverse talent, particularly at leadership levels. This effect is most pronounced in organizations that lack diverse leadership to begin with, as representation issues may be cues to qualified diverse candidates that their potential trajectory is limited.

b. Engagement: the level of productivity and motivation experienced by the majority of all employees, which is highly correlated with inclusive leadership practices.

c. Advancement: the ability of an organization to retain and develop diverse employees of all kinds, and to benefit from the variety of perspectives that exist in a diverse group of well-integrated individuals.

2. Culture is comprised of: Innovation, Leadership, and Transformation.

a. Innovation: the capacity of an organization to capture new market share, create new products/services and develop ahead of its competition in order to take or maintain a primary position within its industry.

b. Leadership: the extent to which organizational leaders demonstrate inclusive behaviors on a consistent basis. In the majority of cases, well-intentioned leaders who lack training in inclusive behaviors fail to capitalize on the full potential within their workforce.

c. Transformation: the ability of a company to shift its prevailing characteristics intentionally, for the betterment of the organization at large and its employees. Culture transformation is a notoriously difficult process, but when it is successful, it reaps rewards in numerous areas, including company productivity and profitability.
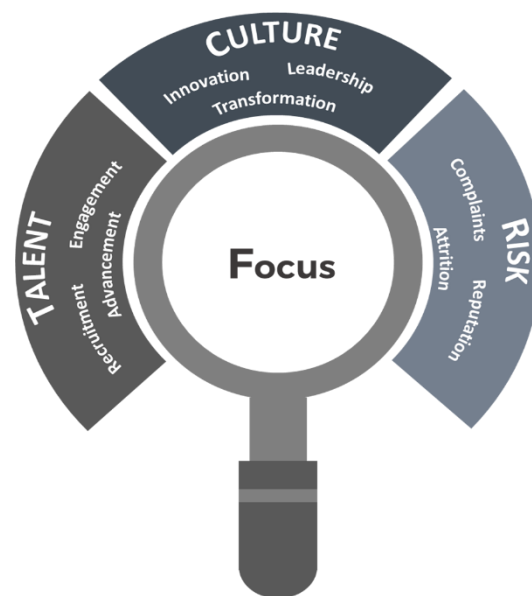
Focus on the Core areas of Talent, Culture and Risk

3. Risk is comprised of Complaints, Attrition, and Reputation.

   a. Complaints: the type and quantity of concerns voiced by employees, clients, and other stakeholders related to diversity and inclusion within the company. These may range from unfair expectations for a particular demographic to blatant sexual harassment.

   b. Attrition: sometimes called "regrettable attrition," the employees in good standing that choose to leave the organization. Often these individuals take jobs with competitive companies and end up directly working against the interests of their previous organization.

   c. Reputation: the public perception of a company's perspective and activities relative to diversity and inclusion, both within the organization and within the community. In cases when an employee or job candidate comes to believe that a gap exists between perception and reality, regrettable attrition, disengagement, and complaints all become additional risk factors.

These areas are the most common areas that cause issues in organizations around diversity and inclusion. These are not addressed in this section in detail, but rather as they are the primary subject of this white paper, they have an entire section of their own that explores these focus areas in granular detail (see page 11).

II.   Take Strategic Action: AEA

Diversity and Inclusion activities require a strategic approach that Lead Inclusively calls "AEA" – or Assess, Educate, Apply. This approach provides the company an opportunity to "Assess" baseline inclusion behaviors, whether that is in terms of the organization as a whole or its leadership (or both). It also "Educates" leaders and individual contributors alike, to that builds awareness of both unconscious bias and inclusive behaviors. Finally, the "Apply" step ensures that the company has a mechanism in place to scale and sustain the impact of the assessment and education over time.

Assess, Strategize and Apply sustainably to improve performance.
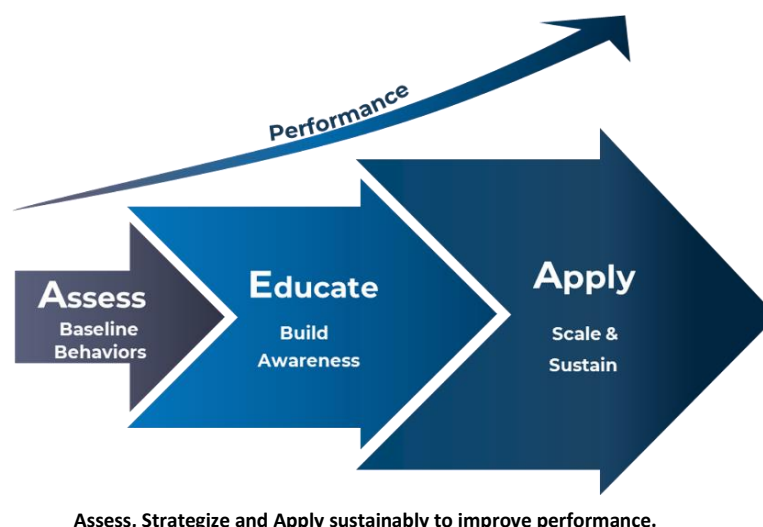
Assess

First, figure out what area/s need to be addressed. Without taking a baseline or knowing where gaps exist within the organization, meaningful and strategic activities cannot be implemented. Lead Inclusively's Organizational Inclusion Assessment evaluates eight separate areas of the business in order to understand the diversity and inclusion gaps within the organization's processes. The Lead Inclusively Leadership Inclusion Index provides an overview of leadership inclusion behaviors that drive business results, and the extent to which leaders in the business are actively practicing these behaviors. This can be deployed as a self-assessment or a full 360 with up to five respondents.

Educate

After assessment has been completed, education for employees must be implemented, in order to scale knowledge of diversity and inclusion within the workforce. Lead Inclusively provides scalable eLearning, "From Unconscious Bias to Inclusive Behaviors," which teaches an action-oriented overview of the business case for diversity and inclusion, unconscious bias awareness, and the key inclusive behaviors that drive business results. With easily-digestible micro-learning modules that are more effective than traditional eLearning, the course is simple to deploy and easy for even the busiest executives to complete.

Apply

Apply a sustainability component to ensure that inclusion behaviors are spread throughout the organization in a low-effort way. Lead Inclusively has developed the world's first Inclusion App, which uses drip messaging algorithms to curate a personalized curriculum that reinforces inclusion behaviors through a painless, automated mechanism. This next-gen technology provides virtual coaching to users at the key inclusion moments that matter most for business results.

III.   Measure What Matters: The 3Rs of Inclusion™

After many years of honing in on leadership development related to raising the level of unconscious bias awareness, without any discernible impact on business results, Lead Inclusively began to test the hypothesis that if it could develop those leadership behaviors that are at the intersection of inclusion and innovation, the ROI would be significant. It turns out that this hypothesis was, in fact, correct. The leadership behaviors that must be measured and improved upon and that matter most to business results are Lead Inclusively's "3 Rs of Inclusion™."

Key Inclusion Behaviors: The 3 Rs of Inclusion™

The key inclusion behaviors that deliver the results described, as well as many other business benefits, break down into three broad categories. These categories of leadership characteristics are Lead Inclusively's 3Rs of Inclusion™ – broadly categorized as behaviors that are Receptive, Reflective and Revitalizing.

Receptive

Being receptive is being *accepting* of others, as well as truly *curious* about the differences in people. Actions that demonstrate a person's ability to be receptive include the following:

- Acknowledges those who speak up and offer ideas, even if they are contrary to historic ways of thinking.
- Invests time to learn what matters most to others.
- Consistently seeks out diverse opinions on critical business issues.

Lead Inclusively's proprietary self-assessment, the Leadership Inclusion Index, measures a leader's ability to be receptive by asking questions that relate to these and other receptive behaviors. For example, one question that addresses receptivity relates to whether and to what extend the leader "finds ways for the quieter voices on the team to be heard."

Business results are fueled by leaders who arouse the curiosity of their workforce, accept new ideas, and encourage a robust assessment of opportunity and risk. When a leader is able to be receptive on a consistent basis, teams are more engaged, and ideation increases regarding critical business challenges.
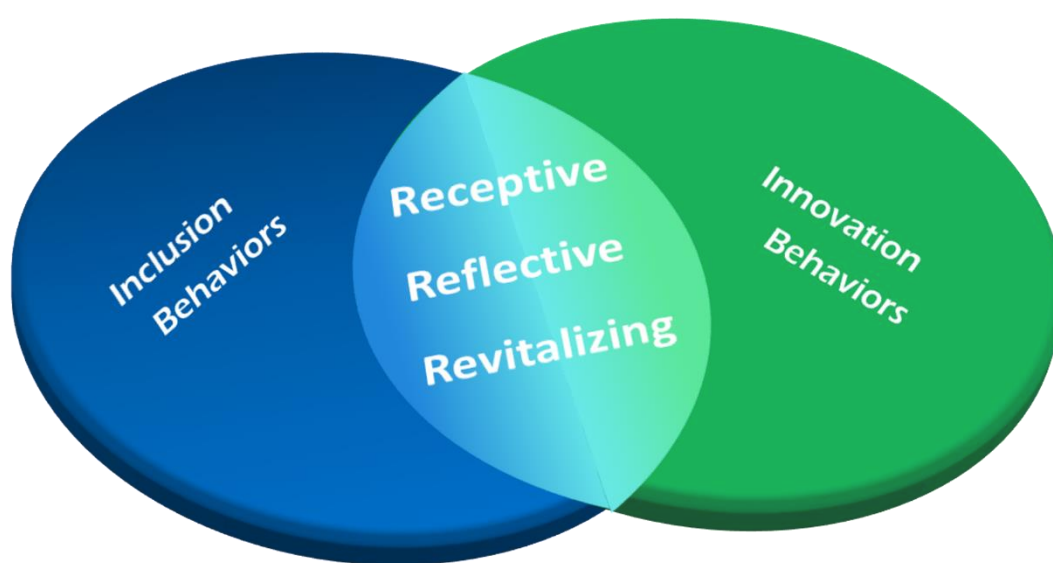
Lead Inclusively's 3Rs of Inclusion™

Reflective

Being reflective is about being *self-aware* (particularly relative to personal biases) and *transparent* about decision making, to the extent that it is possible under the circumstances. A leader who is reflective is aware of biases that may impact his/her decisions and interactions and committed to reducing the business impact that these biases may cause. Specific inclusion behaviors that describe a reflective leader include the following:

- Regularly explains why final decisions are made, honestly and transparently.
- Intentionally builds bridges across geographical, cultural, and functional boundaries.

- Is aware of how his/her own cultural bias impacts his/her business decisions.

Within the Leadership Inclusion Index. one of the questions that assesses a leader's ability to be reflective relates to whether he or she "regularly reflects on how his or her personal biases impact business decisions."

Under reflective leadership, talent retention can improve, and more diverse talent is able to progress through the ranks of the organization.

Revitalizing

Revitalizing behavior is about being *inspirational* and *empowering*, particularly relating to team members and empowering their work by providing tools or resources needed for success. More specifically, a revitalizing leader inspires a team by empowering them to ideate, achieve, and contribute thought leadership at every level of the organization.

- Encourages the sharing of different opinions, viewpoints, and ideas.
- Spends time giving feedback and helping team members perform.
- Motivates everyone to bring their best self to work by empowering ideas whenever possible.

The Leadership Inclusion Index measures these behaviors and more. One question related to a leader's ability to be revitalizing concerns the extent to which they "give periodic, consistent feedback to team members in order to help them perform."

Business results are fueled by leaders who empower others to experiment and support moving from ideas to execution. Revitalizing leaders encourage every team member to achieve excellence, which contributes to a productive, inclusive culture.

For leaders who have a gap in their ability to demonstrate these inclusion behaviors, the Leadership Inclusion Index provides a customized action plan with recommendations for specific activities over a period of 8 weeks in order to help improve their skill. Leaders who are able to effectively demonstrate

behaviors that are receptive, reflective, and revitalizing are also able to deliver the greatest results in terms of business objectives.

6. Proven Results

Lead Inclusively worked with a prominent life sciences company to bring lasting, substantive results. Suffering from poor upper management gender ratios and low employee engagement among women, this company's executive team wanted the company to change. After going through the Lead Inclusively process, which includes assessment, eLearning, workshops and coaching, the company now boasts an 8 percent overall increase in gender diversity, 7 percent increase in employee engagement and 10 percent increase in women at mid- and senior-management roles. These results are attainable by nearly any organization that is willing to place the resources behind a true culture transformation using the Lead Inclusively FSM Methodology™.

7. Focus on the Core Drill Down (TCR™)

The remainder of this white paper is an overview of the ways in which diversity and inclusion issues can be the source of organizational challenges in Lead Inclusively's core focus areas of Talent, Culture, and Risk. Additionally, this section reviews some of the methods that companies use in order to resolve these challenges.

8. Talent: Recruitment, Engagement, Advancement

8.1 Recruitment

The Issue

Companies that fail to recruit diverse talent can experience a number of symptoms, including lack of engagement (leading to lower productivity and retention), lower innovation (leading to reduced product or service pipeline), and lower company revenue. These negative outcomes take a toll on the organization.

Why It Matters

Job seekers care about diversity statistics. 67% of active and passive job seekers said that a diverse workforce is an important factor when evaluating companies and job offers, according to a recent LinkedIn survey. That means that whether or not a company is interested in increasing its diversity demographics, chances are that candidates are evaluating diversity when they research their potential new company and during the interview process.[i]

Homogenous leadership can cause a lack of diversity. Women are 20% less likely than straight white men to win endorsement for their ideas in companies without diverse leadership; people of color are 24% less likely; and LGBTs are 21% less likely.[ii]

Lack of diversity in gender and race depress financial returns. Companies in the bottom quartile both for gender and for ethnicity and race are statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns than the average companies in the data se. That means bottom-quartile companies are lagging, rather than merely not leading.[iii]

Non-diverse companies realize less revenue. Companies that don't have gender parity make 2.3 times less revenue per employee.[iv]

The Opportunity

If a company recognizes its workforce in these symptoms, it is worth noting that the majority of Fortune 500 companies are not significantly diverse (particularly at the executive level). Effectively addressing this gap presents a potential for competitive advantage. The statistics are clear:

Diverse companies are more innovative: 38% more revenue from innovative products and services have been generated by diverse companies, compared to industry peers. This means that diverse companies are able to more effectively implement innovative ideas.[v]

Racially diverse companies create more revenue: 15x more sales revenue is brought in by the companies reporting the highest levels of racial diversity, compared to those reporting the lowest levels of racial diversity. This means that companies which effectively bring in and engage a racially diverse workforce can realize greater revenues.[vi]

Diverse companies capture more market share: Employees at these companies are 45% likelier to report that their firm's market share grew over the previous year and 70% likelier to report that the firm captured a new market. This means that companies with strong inherent and acquired diversity out-innovate and out-perform others.[vii]

Approaches

To address the issue of recruiting diverse talent, organizations take many roads, some more effective than others.

1. **Engineering the bias out of talent processes.** Nobody creates a process that is purposefully biased, but many times the way these processes play out in the workplace can hamper D&I goals. Now, companies are taking initiative to review processes to ensure they support D&I objectives, like requiring a diverse slate of candidates and mandating a diverse interview panel.

2. **Creating a referral program.** This can happen through a variety of sources, but is especially likely to happen through ERGs, so that groups of engaged, diverse employees can assist in driving change.

3. **University recruiting.** Often this focuses on young women and minorities, including recruiting from the [Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs)](#) as well as through specifically targeted, student-run associations like the "Association of Women Engineers" or "Students for Hispanic Professional Opportunity."

4. **Tracking Metrics that Matter.** Number and percentage of gender or race by level is just the start; there are targeted metrics that can be used to help figure out exactly where the talent pipeline is leaking.

5. **Using Technology.** A small percentage of companies have begun leveraging software that can assist in D&I goals, such as blind resume review software, which cleans resumes of gender and racial signals that can trigger unconscious bias.

8.2 Engagement

The Issue:

Companies that fail to engage their talent, particularly diverse talent, can experience symptoms ranging from increased attrition to reduced company revenue, poor pulse survey scores, and more. Low employee engagement isn't a unique challenge. In fact, more than half of employees surveyed report that they aren't engaged at work. Even worse, disengagement is contagious. From lower employee morale to reduced productivity, if employees aren't engaged it means the company is at risk of losing key talent or having that talent "show up" for work, without gaining the maximum amount of productivity and ideation that happens when employees are invested in their workplace because they have a sense of well-being and belonging.

Why it Matters:

Employee disengagement is expensive. In the United States alone, disengaged employees annually cost companies over $500 Billion (that's billion, with a B). This means that companies are losing money every day because employees aren't showing up to work fully.[viii]

Most employees are not engaged at work. According to employees in the U.S., almost 70% consider themselves anywhere along the axis of "not engaged" to "actively disengaged." That's a tremendous loss in terms of productivity and a delay in reaching company business goals.[ix]

Companies aren't satisfied with their engagement scores. Employee engagement has room for improvement in most organizations: just 12% of businesses report being happy with current levels of employee engagement. This means that low employee engagement scores can result in leaders being viewed as lacking the strategic team insight that leads to full engagement.[x]

The Opportunity:

Engaged employees are more productive. Companies with engaged employees experience 17% higher productivity compared to companies without engaged employees. Since inclusion and belonging lead to full engagement, this means that inclusion drives increased productivity.[xi]

Engaged employees drive company profit. Companies with engaged employees achieve an average of 21% higher profitability compared to those with disengaged employees**.** This means that companies that succeed in engaging their employees have a strategic advance over the competition.[xii]

Great D&I practices improve engagement scores for all employees. Employees' positive perceptions of D&I practices are positively related to employee engagement for all employees, not just minority groups. Perceptions in this case are derived from the actual 'policies and practices that make up an organization's diversity practices' – the tangible actions taken for diversity. This means companies taking steps to ensure impactful D&I practices are in place, will benefit across all demographics.[xiii]

Approaches:

There are a number of approaches that companies take in their attempts to address disengaged employees and drive greater employee engagement.

Inclusive Benefits Packages: Flex work options, robust professional development offerings, physical and mental health and wellness options, and providing generous paid parental leave to both mothers and fathers are only a few of the benefits that can make a company more inclusive. Utilize the workforce to

brainstorm and prioritize which benefits would make the biggest impact on the company's diversity and inclusion goals.

Employee Recognition Programs: Employee engagement isn't the same as employee satisfaction. The last thing an organization needs is a team of satisfied underperformers. Linking employee recognition to high performance is one way to ensure teams keep realizing their full potential. Many companies are instituting regular employee recognition programs on an organizational, departmental, and team basis, with appropriate cadence for that recognition in many categories. These programs shouldn't replace regular feedback from supervisors but can act as an additional incentive for engagement.

Inclusion Training for Leaders: Employees who feel a strong sense of belonging and inclusion are significantly more engaged than those who do not feel they are working in an inclusive workplace. Companies that want to get ahead of the curve are providing training to leaders on how to implement specific inclusive behaviors on the job, from interviewing to onboarding to people management. Inclusive leaders bring out the best in their teams and create a shared sense of purpose that can help employees bring their best and most authentic selves to work.

Leadership Aligned with Company Values: Employees may disengage when they perceive that formal company stated values aren't actually practiced by company managers and leaders. Zero tolerance for those who don't align with these stated values sends a clear message that the organization practices what it preaches and provides cultural stability to the workforce at large.

Employee Feedback Surveys that are acted upon: Sending out feedback surveys and not utilizing the information collected to make impactful change, can exhaust and discourage employees. On the other hand, employees who know their feedback is valued and acted upon, feel that their company listens to their input and thus feel more invested in the workplace. Companies can take internal survey mechanisms to the next level by providing transparency on selected results, as well as clearly communicating when they are acting in response to employee feedback. Companies that are not actively requesting employee input can take the first step at any time. It's never too late to get started.

Employee Resource Groups: Many companies have established employee resource groups (ERGs) to provide additional support and development opportunities for key diverse demographics and their allies.

ERGs for women, people of color, and LGBTQ+ are some common designations. A company that already has established ERGs can take them to the next level by transforming these ERGs into Business Resource Groups (BRGs), which provide meaningful support to the business as well.

8.3 Advancement

The Issue:

Due to unconscious bias, people tend to more easily trust others who are like themselves. In the workplace, leaders are more inclined to provide stretch assignments, travel, and advancement opportunities to those they trust. In a male-dominated company, for example, this "similar-to-me bias" can negatively impact women's advancement. It is unintentional, yet insidious. Organizations that may observe a marked difference in the percentage of women or people of color rising through the ranks are the norm. The majority of companies are in a similar position, but the good news is that change –even rapid change—is possible.

Why it matters:

Recruiting suffers: Diverse candidates tend not to trust a non-diverse interviewing panel, and it's impossible to have a diverse interviewing panel without diversity at the top of the organization. When a diverse candidate does not see himself or herself represented at the top of the organization, particularly when the candidate is interviewing for more senior positions, it appears that there may not be room for them to advance in the organization (or that their advancement might be unnecessarily difficult). Ensuring that the company is able to advance key diverse talent through the talent pipeline can be critical to continuing the flow of diversity into the organization.

Attrition Increases: Diverse employees are unlikely to believe they have a future at a company where they do not see themselves represented at the top. As they rise through the ranks, they tend to leave a company they perceive to be non-inclusive in order to seek greater opportunity elsewhere.

The opportunity:

Increased revenue: Companies with more women and people of color in senior leadership outperform competitors. According to McKinsey, companies in the top quartile for gender and racial diversity were 35% more likely to have financial returns above their industry average.[xiv]

Increased innovation: Companies with more women and people of color are more likely to be innovation leaders than industry peers. In fact, companies with more women have been shown to be significantly more likely to introduce radical new innovation into the market over a two-year period, compared to companies with less gender diversity, and businesses run by culturally diverse leadership teams were more likely to develop new products than those with homogenous leadership.[xv]

More accurate: Diverse teams make fewer factual errors when handling information, including on jury trials. Scientists think that diverse teams may outperform homogenous ones in decision making because they process information more carefully. It seems counterintuitive to considering the perspective of an outsider, but the payoff is well worth the cognitive exercise it requires.[xvi]

Approaches:

Engineer the bias out of talent processes: It's true that a process cannot be biased in the same way that a human is, but talent processes designed without an eye toward ensuring a level playing field for all employees can often produce biased results. For an organization interested in advancing diverse talent, this is particularly true as it relates to performance management. Engineering the bias out of the performance management process can ensure diverse talent has a more equitable experience and company metrics show an increase in diverse talent advancing through the talent pipeline.

Train Leaders on Unconscious Bias. Part of the challenge of advancing diverse talent is a matter of human bias. Training leaders to recognize and mitigate unconscious bias, as well as providing them training on inclusive behaviors can assist in lessening the impact of bias on the aspects of people management that can inadvertently create a barrier to the success of diverse employees. It is important to remember that, while raising awareness related to unconscious bias is important, the training offered

must also address what inclusive behaviors are, what they look like, and how they can be utilized on a daily basis in the workplace.

Develop Mentorship and Sponsorship Programs. Mentorship and sponsorship are two different yet necessary aspects of advancing diverse talent. Developing a program to provide mentorship (assistance on specific business issues) and sponsorship (accountability to assist in organizational navigation to achieve success) to diverse talent can empower diverse employees to succeed in the organization and provide a mechanism to achieve equity among employees.

9. Culture: Innovation, Leadership, Transformation

9.1 Innovation

The Issue:

In this new digital world of technology and AI, effective, impactful and prolific innovation is increasingly critical to company success. When a company becomes more inclusive, it also becomes more effective at leveraging the diverse ideation and experiences of each member of the workforce, leading to a culture of innovation. An innovation culture is one in which employees feel that their company places high value on the contribution of diverse ideas from everyone. It is also a culture that does not place judgment or blame on ideas that fail. That means all ideas are encouraged and employees are empowered to test those ideas in an atmosphere of experimentation and learning agility. Empowering employees to be experimental without fear of failure fosters organizational success.

Why It Matters:

The need to innovate is higher than ever

84% of executives say that innovation is important to their growth strategy.[xvii] Industries, technologies and economies are changing at exponential rates, making a company's ability to innovate more important

than ever. Workplaces that are both diverse and inclusive are associated with higher individual performance because employees are better able to innovate (+83%) and maintain engagement.[xviii]

Non-inclusive companies produce less innovation: According to the 2017 PwC Innovation Benchmark, 54% of innovating organizations have trouble bridging the gap between innovation strategy and overall business strategy. Innovation occurs more readily in organizations and teams where everyone feels safe enough to share their ideas and debate the merits of ideas without feeling fear that there will be negative consequences for doing so.[xix]

Companies that do not innovate become irrelevant: In today's world, companies must accept industry disruption as a given. In fact, according to a recent survey, 80% of executives think their current business models are at risk to be disrupted.[xx] Companies that failed to innovate include former monoliths of industry such as Blockbuster, which failed to innovate when Netflix came on the scene and was rendered irrelevant within four years of Netflix launching its streaming services.

The Opportunity:

Inclusive companies are more innovative and reach more new markets

One inclusive behavior is allowing teams a safe space to respectfully debate one another's ideas. A recent Berkeley study found that teams that debate the merits of one another's ideas (instead of brainstorming more collaboratively) come up with 25% more ideas. Additional research from the Boston Consulting Group found that Diverse and Inclusive companies were able to increase market share 15% more and capture new markets 20% more than the non-diverse workplaces.[xxi]

Inclusive Behavior Maximizes Innovation

Employees at companies with inclusive leadership are more likely than employees at non-diverse companies to take risks, challenge the status quo, and embrace a diverse array of inputs. They are also 75% more likely to see their ideas move through the product pipeline and make it to the marketplace.[xxii] This means that a company's ability to embrace inclusive leadership translates to its business results and can drive the level of innovative thought that leads to successful market disruption.

Diversity drives increased revenue Companies that are more diverse than average have generated 38% more of their revenues from innovative products and services, compared to companies that are less diverse. These numbers demonstrate that bottom line dollars are on the table when innovation and inclusion are successfully embedded into the organization's processes.[xxiii]

Approaches:

Intrapreneur programs

The term "intrapreneur" programs has been dubbed to identify "internal entrepreneur" programs. Many companies are using intrapreneur programs to give their employees the freedom and platform to innovate independently and give them the chance to takes direct responsibility for turning an idea into a profitable finished product through assertive risk-taking and innovation. Examples of this include Qualcomm's Thinkabit Labs, and Google's rule that employees should spend 20% of their workweek on their own projects – a practice which ultimately led to the creation of Gmail and other hugely popular Google products. Infuse inclusion into the mix by seeking to reach the widest variety of individuals for participation within intrapreneur programs to leverage the greatest amount of perspectives.

Innovation workshops and experiences

Innovation workshops can also stoke the fire for inclusive innovation. The "d.school," the School of Design at Stanford University, was the birthplace of Design Thinking – a powerful, human-centered design innovation framework. Lead Inclusively's Inclusive Innovation Workshop takes that framework and lifts it to a completely new level, infusing principles of inclusive behaviors into the process of Design Thinking to create an interactive experience that demonstrates to participants how inclusion actively accelerates the process of innovation.

9.2 Leadership

The Issue:

Leadership sets the tone for the organization. A company seeking to embrace the benefits of diversity and inclusion will have limited success without buy-in from leaders at the top of the organization. However, despite best intentions, most leaders simply have not been trained to recognize or cultivate a truly inclusive leadership style and can inadvertently stifle innovation and creativity in their teams though lack of awareness of how significantly the free expression of ideas depends upon an authentic sense of belonging.

Why It Matters:

Non-inclusive leadership limits engagement. Research has shown that most employees are disengaged, and that is largely a result of poor (non-inclusive) leadership, who tend to be more engaged themselves, while average company engagement is low among individual contributors. This means that non-inclusive leaders and managers are a primary driver of many talent issues that arise from low engagement.[xxiv]

'Employees leave managers, not companies.' This aphorism is, in fact, supported by data. New analysis has shown that although employees do leave non-inclusive and ineffective managers, a lack of inclusivity at the senior leadership has an even higher impact on employee attrition. This means that the culture, tone and policies espoused by leadership can make or break the success of an organization.

The Opportunity:

Leaders set the tone for the organization. Employees mirror the behaviors of leaders as they look to guidance on how to behave and fit in an organization. Thus, leaders set the culture of the organization through their words and actions every day. Leveraging this influence, leaders can use inclusion to positively impact employee's hearts and minds, aligning around a common purpose. Companies with effective leadership have up to a 15% premium on equity.[xxv]

Inclusive Leadership is related to employee engagement. Multiple studies confirm that strong inclusive leadership is correlated with high employee engagement. One such study shows that trust and confidence in leaders is as a major factor impacting employee engagement.[xxvi]

Inclusive Leadership Improves Team Performance. Studies have shown that diverse teams, inclusively managed, outperform non-diverse teams and homogenous teams alike. Leaders can take this opportunity to promote inclusion by setting personal examples and actively moving the organization to a more inclusive culture.[xxvii]

Approaches:

Companies have taken many approaches to build more inclusive cultures. Some of these methods include:

Training / Professional Development: Awareness is the first step toward a transformation that will drive a more inclusive culture. It has long been a best practice in D&I to hold unconscious bias training, and there are many of these courses available to leaders both live and online. However, recent research reveals that heightened awareness often does not provide tools to move towards an inclusive mindset. Leaders are better served with learning opportunities that address both unconscious bias and inclusive behaviors, with a specific emphasis on inclusive business behaviors and a practical action plan to incorporate those behaviors into day to day leadership.

Making the Business Case: Leaders who are interested in embedding inclusion in their teams and organizations have a variety of options to choose from, many of which require support and active participation from employees and leadership. Since these initiatives often are not viewed as a business priority, even with mounting evidence of their impact on the bottom line, an inclusive leader is responsible for framing the narrative and making a clear case for why inclusion should be a business priority in today's business and cultural environment.

Experienced D&I Leadership: Non-D&I practitioners, while well-intentioned, often lack the subject matter expertise to develop a successful culture transformation program related to diversity and inclusion. Oftentimes, D&I activities are handed off as an additional responsibility to HR or business leaders, who

rarely succeed in affecting long term change and are not trained in the process of change management. A dedicated D&I council or experienced D&I leadership team has been shown to be more successful in linking the business units and HR to D&I transformation success.

Inclusion KPIs for Leaders: Leaders who have effectively incorporated an inclusive leadership style all have one thing in common. Their organizations set D&I related inclusion performance indicators that can be measured and tracked just as their other leadership KPIs are measured and tracked. These steps ensure that the organization can measure inclusive leadership and address any roadblocks or issues that may otherwise derail a successful transformation.

9.3 Transformation

The Issue:

Company culture is the personality of an organization and includes the company's mission, expectations, and work atmosphere. Culture is largely defined by two elements: the formal culture (the intended experience as it is written on paper) and the informal culture (how it is experienced on a daily basis by those who are in the environment). The primary purpose of culture transformation initiatives is to align the formal and informal cultures so that the employee experience matches the company's stated vision and values. For diverse employees, this alignment of formal and informal culture is especially important, and a lack of this alignment is often the reason that organizations experience difficulty retaining diverse employees.

Why it matters:

Poor culture (culture resulting in low job satisfaction) is correlated with high attrition: A Columbia University study shows that the likelihood of job turnover at an organization with strong company culture (as defined by job satisfaction) is a mere 13.9%, whereas the probability of job turnover in poor company cultures is 48.4%.[xxviii]

Executives don't understand culture well enough: Fewer than one in three executives (28%) report that they understand their organization's culture. They know culture is important, but don't necessarily

understand what their organization stands for or how their organizational culture is defined, much less how it is perceived by frontline employees.[xxix]

There is room for improvement: Only 12% of executives believe their companies are driving the 'right culture'. The remainder feel there is room for improvement.[xxx]

The Opportunity:

Strong culture increases talent diversity: Building an employer brand and company culture helps companies hire the right people (55%), get a greater number of qualified candidates (49%), increase employee referrals (41%), and have more diverse candidates (32%).[xxxi]

Culture is critical to success: 94% of executives and 88% of employees believe a distinct workplace culture is important to business success.[xxxii]

Approaches:

All-Hands Meetings: Ensuring that everyone in the company hears the same message about company goals sends a clear message that the leadership teams are aligned in their vision for the organization and helps educate employees about the "why" behind the work. An All-Hands Meeting (or "Town Hall") is the perfect opportunity to send a clear and decisive message about what the organization stands for, including the fact that inclusion is part of this definition.

Consulting Services: Making a concerted effort toward a company culture shift requires significant skills in change management. An external consultant can assist in crafting a cohesive strategy, as well as provide an unbiased perspective on issues that may be confusing for those who are closer to them. A third-party consultant also has the benefit of knowing best practices across industries and may also have its own thought-leadership relative to the "next practices" in culture transformation and sustainability of that culture.

Recruiting efforts: Many companies try to recruit for "culture fit." A forward-looking company seeking to change company culture can make efforts to recruit those who are a fit with the desired culture, rather

than the current culture if the current culture is not ideal. Recruiting candidates whose goals and passions fit the desired culture can help tip the scales from a toxic environment to a healthier one. These individuals actually become part of the change process by being change agents themselves.

Embracing Technology: Making culture change sustainable can be simpler when companies embrace technologies like interactive intranet forums, learning management system courses on culture, apps, and other digital tools that can assist in supporting communications and scaling culture change.

Risk: Complaints, Attrition, Reputation

10.1 Complaints

The Issue:

Every organization is at a different stage in its journey toward full maturity relative to diversity and inclusion. Some organizations have extensive training and sustainability mechanisms in place to incorporate D&I key performance indicators into every aspect of the business. At the other extreme, some have not even taken baseline metrics related to demographic representation. Then, of course, there are companies whose journey has begun and is ever-evolving, learning from mistakes and leveraging opportunity for growth and learning along the way. Many companies are confronted with employee complaints and lawsuits related to discrimination issues. While pending complaints or lawsuits may at first seem to derail or decelerate D&I initiatives, it is important to realize that, with strong communication between corporate attorneys and H.R., D&I initiatives can be a useful adjunct to both the defense of lawsuits and the reduction or elimination of future complaints.

Why It Matters:

D&I complaints can negatively impact a company's position in the market. When Kate Upton accused Guess of harassment, the company lost $250 million in market value overnight.[xxxiii] What this means is that companies can no longer ignore the impact of complaints stemming from lack of inclusion.

The damage had already been done even before the case was concluded. A similar situation at Uber in 2017 dropped their market share from 90% to 75%.[xxxiv] When a toxic D&I culture is not uncovered due to lack of awareness of the problem or lack of transparency and accountability at multiple levels of the organization, the fall-out is significant.

D&I litigation is costly – When employee discrimination complaints end up in litigation or result in settlement, it can cost a company hundreds of thousands to multiple millions of dollars. Without an inclusive culture that is embedded throughout the organization, companies expose themselves to significant risk in terms of impact to brand and business.

D&I complaints can negatively impact the talent pipeline: 83% of talent acquisition leaders say that employer branding significantly impacts their ability to hire talent. If the employer brand is impacted by negative news about litigation or complaints, especially around diversity demographics, the company risks alienating significant segments of potential candidates from the hiring process. Similarly, existing employees experience an increased sense of frustration when company messaging around D&I does not translate into action or policies. This results in further in attrition of these segments, which exacerbates the issue.[xxxv]

The Opportunity:

Decreased organizational risk. Having an inclusive culture decreases risk by 30%. Inclusive Leaders and employees who are open to differences and embrace new ideas are able to anticipate important issues and address them before they develop into litigation or a class action suit against the company.[xxxvi]

Stable talent pipeline. As competition for key talent increases, companies that are able to hold on to the best employees will outpace the competition. The unemployment rate has fallen steadily over the past few years and acquiring and holding on to key talent has become much more difficult for organizations that rely on financial incentives alone. Job candidates are increasingly evaluating their future employers based on alternative criteria, such as how employees are treated, how inclusive the culture is and whether employees are raising red flags through complaints. This means that companies with the ability to implement key inclusion practices win.[xxxvii]

Approaches:

Proactive, Inclusive Communication. If complaints have been made public, the most effective approach is to provide significant transparency around D&I data (even when that data is not ideal), share the company's goals and commitment to improving both demographics and organizational inclusion culture, and name the specific steps that will be taken to achieve those goals. This transparency demonstrates that the company is willing to be accountable, which can assist in reclaiming goodwill from the public and from employees alike. Strategic communications include not over-promising results and sharing success in reaching stated goals, can positively impact company brand and internal morale.

Inclusive behavior training for leaders. Leadership behaviors do the most to contribute to D&I related complaints on the one hand and employee satisfaction on the other hand. The behaviors of leaders (be they senior executives or managers) can drive up to 70 percentage points of difference between the percentage of employees who feel highly included and those who do not. This effect is even stronger for minority group members.[xxxviii] An organization seeking to become truly inclusive, can provide training for leaders to help close the gap between those who feel included and those who do not. To make this goal more achievable, consider leveraging technology, such as automated inclusive leadership assessments, a learning management system (LMS) eLearning course or The Inclusion App.

Keep an eye on non-traditional outlets for complaint communication. Employees often turn to anonymous platforms such as Glassdoor, Blind, Fishbowl etc. to communicate and air their frustrations and issues. Companies must monitor these outlets regularly and analyze any trend that may expose the company to risk. Organizations should seek to understand the content of the complaints, rather than judging them at face value, and should investigate if they note a recurring trend or a singular specifically identifiable concern. There is always the possibility that a small percentage of individuals who complain are not being objective about their experience, but for those who have legitimate concerns, it is always better to be proactive about addressing and resolving these concerns. Remember too, that perception is reality and minimizing or marginalizing a complaint, rather than evaluating or addressing it, can expose the company to immediate or future liability or brand dilution.

Establish more inclusive employee relations channels. Employees are not very comfortable reporting or speaking to H.R., as they are afraid of exposure or even retaliation. Employee perception is generally that H.R.'s role is to protect the organization, rather than to protect the individual employee. With an inclusion mindset from the organization, a process can be established to both understand employee perspectives as well as act with prudence with regard to company protection.

10.2 Attrition

The Issue:

Attrition of diverse talent is a significant risk in organizations today. Many organizations are suffering from the costs associated with their inability to retain diverse talent over the long term. For a company to find itself in this position is quite common. However, there are several approaches that can help to turn that tide and make a measurable difference in a company's ability not only to merely attract diverse talent, but to include and retain key diverse talent. Strong diversity tends to fuel inclusion, and inclusion in turn tends to fuel retention of diverse talent.

Why It Matters:

Attrition costs up to 70% of each employee's salary

It can cost up to 70% of an employee's annual salary to replace them when they leave. For example, a company can expect to experience $45,000 in costs to replace a worker making $60,000 a year.[xxxix] Gallup also estimates that Millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy $30.5 billion annually. For diverse employees, these numbers can be even more costly as they impact the company financially as well as demographically. Companies that have failed to create an inclusive culture are spending significantly more on recruitment than companies that are able to retain and advance their diverse employees.[xl]

Diversity attrition impacts productivity by up to 65%

Attrition is commonly a byproduct of a general state of low employee engagement which, in turn, also severely impacts workplace productivity. Organizations whose employees reported high engagement had 25% to 65% less attrition than their peers[xli] with under-represented groups (particularly women and minorities) experiencing much higher rates of attrition than homogenous ones. Companies with highly engaged workforces outperform peers by 147% in earnings per share.[xlii]

Diverse talent experiences attrition at a much higher rate

In a recent internal survey, Google noted that it was experiencing its highest attrition rates among Black and Latino employees, offsetting most, if not all the progress it was attempting to make in diversifying its talent pipeline. According to McKinsey, women also experience higher rates of turnover, despite the fact that they do not express a greater desire to leave companies than men do.[xliii]

The Opportunity:

Inclusion increases retention of diverse talent

72% of workforce think society's focus on D&I can help companies build a better working world[xliv] and 83% of millennials report feeling actively engaged when their company culture is inclusive.[xlv] A company's ability to have an inclusive culture is crucial in driving its ability to keep its employees productively engaged, and in turn less likely to leave. By increasing a company's ability to be inclusive, its ability to retain diverse talent increases as well.

Retaining diverse talent increases innovation

In the modern world, diverse ideation and the freedom to debate ideas are among the most important factors companies must incorporate to stay ahead of their competition. In a Berkeley study, teams that debated their ideas from diverse perspectives produced 25% ideas than teams that brainstormed collaboratively.[xlvi] In another study of 4000 companies, the Journal of Innovation reported that those with the highest degree of gender diversity produced significantly more novel innovations.[xlvii]

Approaches:

Ensure consistent company branding

Employees have more options and power than ever before when making decisions on where to work and the current talent pool increasingly values a company that places emphasis on an established culture of D&I. If a company fails to deliver on a promise of D&I that is branded to the public, this can lead new hires to become quickly disillusioned and cause them to explore other options.

Provide benefits that reflect an inclusive culture.

Compelling benefits can include generous and equal time off for new parents regardless of gender, flex work, return to work programs, health and wellness benefits, onsite childcare, and other benefits that enhance the lives of a diverse workforce. These benefits prove that a company values all employees as much as it says it does and can even make the difference when candidates are considering offers or moving to the competition.

Track the metrics that matter:

Rather than simply tracking the demographic composition of the workforce, organizations must track metrics that matter – metrics that are calculated to understand where the talent pipeline is leaking and that will lead to specific interventions that can reduce that leakage. For example, many organizations track the percentage of women in the organization by level, but few are using metrics to determine what percentage of women are on succession plans or setting goals to ensure that women are on those plans at all. Tracking the metrics that matter can shed additional light on where and why the talent pipeline might be leaking, as well as provide ideas about what can be done to mitigate a leaky pipeline.

10.3 Reputation

The Issue:

Once a complaint or lawsuit becomes public, companies addressing brand reputation issues related to diversity and inclusion are at risk for reduced revenue and public trust alike. In addition, companies that lack a significant investment in strategic diversity and inclusion activities are at risk for an impaired brand reputation that can trickle down into numerous negative effects on internal matters, such as how employees feel about being associated with a company with impaired brand reputation. On the other hand, organizations with a strong diversity and inclusion brand can improve their ability to recruit, retain, and advance key talent and maximize their position in the market. A strong D&I brand doesn't just make P.R. sense, it makes business sense.

Why It Matters:

Poor diversity branding can impact revenue. Brand issues related to diversity and inclusion send a message to diverse customers and clients that an organization does not value them. For an organization dealing with D&I brand reputation issues, diversity and Inclusion issues can reduce public trust, leading to reduced revenue and additional brand challenges. Clients and customers must see their "faces" (people like them) in the companies with whom they do business in order to feel known and respected.

Recruitment of diverse candidates suffers. With the internet at their fingertips, job seekers find it easier than ever to learn more about the diversity and inclusion work that an organization is doing (not just what they say they are doing). Everything from Glassdoor scores, annual reporting on Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, and published diversity demographics are fair game for candidates to use in assessing the level of organizational commitment to D&I. Without a strong diversity brand, candidates may find negative information in their research and / or fill any of their knowledge gaps with their own assumptions.

The Opportunity:

Strong employer brands are cost effective

Companies with a stronger employer brand are able to reduce the cost of recruitment, which is a costly expense. Those with strong employer brands can cut their cost per hire by as much as half. This means that building a strong employer brand can save money for the organization. Even more so for diversity hires, which tend to have higher turnover rates.[xlviii]

Strong diversity brands lead to improved diversity recruiting

Employers with a strong brand associated with diversity and inclusion find it easier to recruit diverse candidates into the organization, and if the internal culture is aligned with the brand reputation, these organizations also find it easier to retain these employees as well. With a strong diversity brand, employees can be proud of, companies are tapping into a desire that can accelerate and augment profit and productivity alike.

Approaches:

Companies are taking many different approaches to improving their diversity and inclusion brand reputations. A few include the following:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives

Some companies choose to participate in CSR programs, including community and youth impact programs, as a way to improve their local communities and also increase brand recognition in association with D&I related projects. These may include volunteer work in low-income areas and more.

Publicizing workplace diversity stats and goals

Providing significant transparency around D&I data, share the company's goals, and naming the specific steps that will be taken to achieve those goals goes a long way to enhancing brand reputation. Companies that reclaim public goodwill after an event causes a negative impact typically do so, in part, by showing their willingness to take responsibility for the mistake and publicize their actions toward

improvement. Strategic communications should also address company goals, and what the company is doing to achieve those goals.

Sponsoring diversity events and associations

Diversity associations that are related to a particular industry can both improve diversity brand reputation and create a funnel for recruitment into the organization. For example, engineering companies seeking to recruit more women may do well to sponsor the Society of Black Women Engineers, where their brand will be front and center for the very demographic it seeks to attract. Many other diversity associations exist as well.

10. In Closing

Over time, Lead Inclusively's FSM Methodology™ has been developed to effectively address the organization's ability to perpetuate positive business results through diversity and inclusion by Focusing on the Core, Taking Strategic Action, and Measuring What Matters.

Companies that desire to impact their bottom line through diversity and inclusion should focus on the core areas of talent, culture, and risk. These areas are the most likely to bear the impact of non-optimal diversity and inclusion practices within the organization and can create negative results throughout the business. The effects of inclusion (or the lack thereof) are evident in business results ranging from talent recruitment and engagement to complaints to rate and speed of innovation and ability to capture new markets.

Taking Strategic Action requires first, assessment of both the organization and its leaders. Without assessment of the current inclusion baseline, strategic action cannot be taken because areas of risk and opportunity remain unclear. Once assessment results are received, the organization must educate its leaders and workforce in order to close any gaps. Finally, applying a sustainability measure, such as eLearning or applet technology, can ensure the learning is impactful over time.

Measuring What Matters requires knowledge of meaningful metrics that impact business results, as well as continuous measurement of the movement relative to the initial inclusion baseline over time. Using this

methodology, Lead Inclusively successfully provides large and small companies alike with culture transformation at scale. While this work can be accomplished by a highly skilled team of D&I professionals internally, it is often too labor intensive and complex to be attempted in addition to typical workplace requirements placed on these individuals and they frequently find themselves in need of outside support.

In considering outside support, it is critical to ensure that any third-party vendors in D&I have a proven ability to impact key business metrics relative to talent, culture, and risk. Additionally, vendors should have the capacity to engage strategically on assessing both organizational and leadership inclusion habits and demonstrate the ability to impact those baseline behavioral habits.

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