

INCLUSION

A Leaders' Guide to Being Clued In to Inclusion

"Inclusion is not a strategy to be laminated. It's a capability to be built."



Building an Inclusion Capability

Inclusion is not a nice-to-have-laminated. It's a critical business capability with the power to:

- Drive meaningful connection across teams and with customers
- Deliver innovation big and small
- Name and mitigate risk
- Unearth the "dumb" questions that yield insight and generate progress
- Enhance efficiency
- Establish belonging

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THE CASE FOR INCLUSION

DIVERSITY = WHO HAS A
SEAT

INCLUSION = WHO HAS A
VOICE

Inclusion is more than just the word following the ampersand following Diversity. It is perhaps the most essential leadership capability in current times.

We understand intuitively that Inclusion is the "right thing" - it's good for humanity. But truly it's good for business outcomes too.

Inclusion describes the state in which every member of a team and organization are able to show up as they are and belong. They ask, challenge, participate, and muse. They have and express opinions.

They contribute to organizational outcomes which produces an experience of having skin in the game.

Inclusion isn't defined by a scorecard, but by experience.

When present, it's the engine that powers innovation, enhancements to service and process, risk mitigation, and the insightful questions that trigger progress.

Because the "best" - smartest, wisest, most creative - ideas don't just come from the top. Nor do they all emerge from people who look the same - who've had shared experiences. The greatest ideas come from an amalgam of all of us.

Inclusion drives connection. It unlocks debate, meaningful feedback, hole-poking, iteration, and the calling out of small breaks and pain points that hold our teams back from achieving.

INCLUSION IN ACTION



A senior executive at a global financial services firm visits one of their many document processing centers. He delivers a rousing speech designed to spark productivity.

Following his speech, he walks the floor. He spots a young woman whose job is to run hundreds of documents per day through a scanner.

He says, "How's it going? Anything I can do for you?"

She says, "I need a double-sided scanner so I can run each page through once - not twice."

He sends his assistant to Staples. 20 minutes and \$40 later, the same woman is processing twice as many documents in the same time.

He says, "Why have you never mentioned this before?"

She says, "No one ever asked."

That year, the organization saved more than \$5MM across all of its document processing centers.

FOUR STEPS TO TAKE NOW

INCLUSION COMES FROM ACTION

Inclusion is not a binary. It's not a switch to be flipped. It's a capability built through defining and practicing action. Here is your roadmap to getting there.



01

MAKE A REAL COMMITMENT

What you do in service of Inclusion is only as effective as the degree to which you truly believe, buy in and commit. You will craft your own personal story of commitment.

02

LISTEN FOR INSIGHT

Pull your team together and state your case. Make it personal and real. Then open up some questions and listen hard while your teams talks. Their insights are gold.

03

DEFINE ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Reflect on what your team had to say. Review some of the suggested leader actions we will provide. Add some of your own. Plan your actions and behaviors.

04

ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY

To build a capability over time, you'll need momentum, attention, feedback, celebrations and course-corrections. This comes from a clear accountability.

1. MAKE REAL COMMITMENT

A commitment in this context is more than a promise. It's more than words. It's your path to truly buying into the power of Inclusion – the human and business outcomes it can and will generate.

This begins with your personal reflection. Think back on your own career to date, and ask yourself:

- Did I ever not ask a question for fear of sounding dumb?
- Did I ever not speak an idea because it sounded too small?
- Did I ever not flag a risk because I didn't feel safe pointing it out?
- Did I ever not suggest a fix to a problem because we've always done it this way?
- Did I ever not participate because no one looked, sounded or thought like me?
- Did I ever fail to collaborate because there was no connection on my team?

Use this reflection as inspiration for the commitment you'll make to your team. What did this experience leave you feeling? What opportunity was missed? What problem unsolved? What inefficiency persisted because you didn't speak it? How could a sense of Inclusion changed that outcome for you and your company?

Describe for your team how you want Inclusion to show up. What you hope it feels like for them.

My commitment



What's the biggest idea, concern or question you ever didn't speak? What did your organization leave on the table as a result?

2.

LISTEN FOR INSIGHT

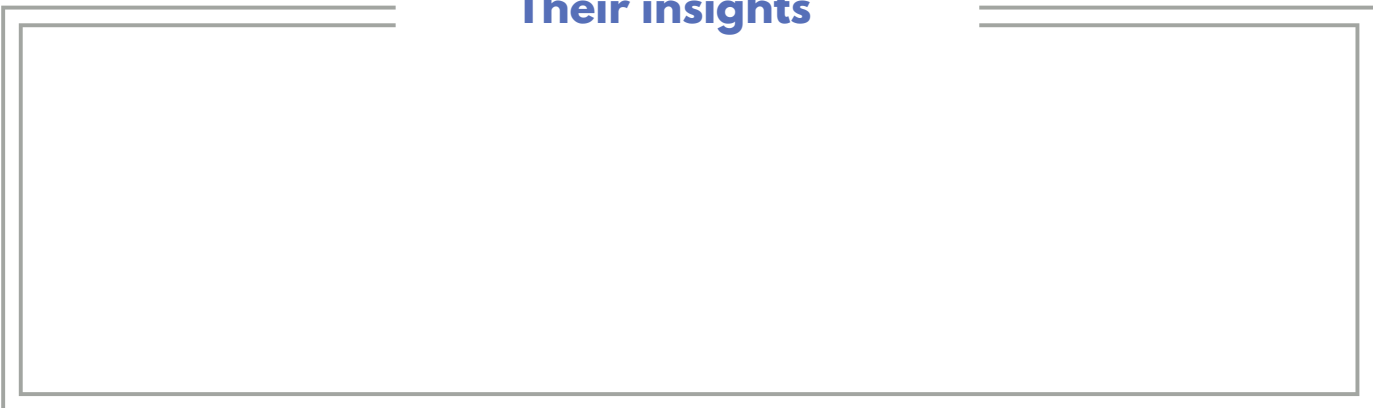
This is where commitment meets dialog. You've crafted a powerful and personal story. Now's the time to share it with your team – leave them with a vision of how you want Inclusion to look and feel. And invite them to shape that vision.

The big next piece is to get some insight from them around what it's going to take to make it happen. Because chances are, there are some obstacles standing in the way. Some you can see and some you can't. This is where some insight from your team becomes critical.

Bring everyone together, make your commitment, and then ask some open-ended questions like:

- What, if anything holds you back from speaking and contributing? Some examples might be...
 - No one's ever asked
 - No time – we're always executing
 - Afraid of sounding dumb
 - Afraid of not being a team player
 - When I speak up I get no feedback
 - People don't want to change
 - I don't have enough info
 - Not sure where to bring ideas
- How can we begin to work together make changes? What can you do? What can I do? What is within our locus of control?

Their insights



You can't always see the obstacles. Sometimes you inadvertently ARE the obstacle.

3. DEFINE ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS

Did your team offer you any fresh insights on what – if anything – holds them back, and how you might partner with them to make change? If not, continue to have that conversation with them until something emerges. Every organization, every team has opportunity.

Now's the time for you to step up and decide – based on what your team shared and based on the outcomes you'd like to achieve. The key is to focus not on grand ideas, but on specific, observable behaviors.

Here's a list of some potential behaviors to get you started, but feel free to add your own.

- Ask open-ended questions
- Let others respond before you speak
- Role model speaking up
- Reward and recognize speaking up
- Invite constructive ideas only when seeking feedback
- Commit to following up on ideas shared
- Schedule and facilitate true dialog with your team
- Invite respectful debate
- Probe for clarity versus just moving on from a "bad" idea

- Where will you begin to change your behavior?
- Do you need anything (permission, support, air cover) to make this happen?
- What signals will you look for to indicate what's working well?

Actions and Behaviors



Choose actions that are seeable by others. You either did or didn't do it every time.

4. ESTABLISH ACCOUNTABILITY

You're busy. You have a day job. It's entirely normal to feel inspired by Inclusion...but also to see your energy and commitment wane. You're not bad – you're human.

Having a means of accountability will help you find victories to celebrate, establish and maintain momentum, get continuous feedback, and course-correct as you go.

You get to choose how you'll establish and maintain accountability. But here are some thought starters for you:

- Ask your boss or peers to check in with you regularly on progress
- Send weekly emails to your team asking for feedback or success stories
- Schedule standing "open dialog" sessions with your team to stay connected
- Send brief "pulse" surveys to your team monthly to see how they're experiencing you
- Reflect weekly on your action plan. Be honest with yourself. How'd you do this week?
- Once you've "mastered" an action (it's become habit), cross it off the list and add a new one
- When you have a "slip up" reflect on why. What triggered it? And how can you change course next time?

Accountability



Celebrating 10 tiny wins will always beat holding your breath, waiting for the big shiny success. Celebrate often.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Inclusion is a journey. It takes time and practice. You'll get things right. You'll fall down. You'll get up again. Stick with it. And let the principles below offer you support along the way.

1

Listen. Don't carry the weight of the world on your shoulders. Let your team, your peers, your boss, and your customers in. This is Inclusion in practice.

2

Give yourself grace. Trying and getting it wrong beats not trying every time.

3

Focus on what you can control. There will always be things you can't. Don't let those distract you.

4

Be humble. Don't wed yourself to any ideas. Be open to success and failure. Let your team define that for you.

5

Be agile. Be ready to switch course or direction at the drop of a hat, in line with feedback.

Most importantly. If you need support. Reach out. Any time.



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