



MGMT 224/624: Leading Diversity in Organizations
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Evidence-Based Tips, Strategies, and Takeaways
02/28/18 SJC

Multiple evidence-based strategies employed by multiple people with varying degrees of control over organizational decision-making are instrumental to leading diversity effectively in organizations. In this document, I offer a variety of research-supported strategies that individual contributors, manager/leaders, and senior managers/executives can use to improve diversity and inclusion in their organizations. There is also a pretty extensive bibliography following the table.

| Topic | What can I do as a human/ organizational member/ individual contributor? | What can I do as a manager/leader? | What can I do as a senior manager/executive? What can we do as an organization? |
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| INTRO TO LEADING DIVERSITY IN ORGANIZATIONS | | | |
| Intro to diversity and inclusion | - Provide your input on norms and strategies for engaging in group conversations across difference and co-create a safe space for these discussions. | - Co-create with subordinates the norms and strategies you will use to engage in more effective group conversations across difference. Create safe space for these discussions by adopting a facilitative role. | - Recognize that the success of any diversity and inclusion initiative must start from the top. Without executive level buy-in and public support, the initiative(s) will likely fail to achieve intended objectives. - Develop and support facilitated safe spaces for employees to engage in conversations about diversity, inclusion, and their experiences in the company. Some spaces should be targeted to specific groups and their allies and others should be open to broader audiences for a discussion of wide-ranging issues and opportunities. |

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| <p>Paradigms for engaging a diverse workforce</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educate yourself on your organization’s diversity paradigm. Question inconsistencies between what is practiced and what is preached when it comes to diversity and inclusion in your organization. - Ask your friends/co-workers about themselves and their experiences in the organization. Use what you’ve learned to improve how you engage with them and others who are different from you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-create with subordinates several norms and strategies for engaging in group conversations across difference. Create safe spaces for these discussions. - Suggest alternative paradigms for managing diversity when the existing one(s) do not seem to be resolving the issue(s) - Meet with your subordinates informally and formally to gain their perspectives on the company’s approach to diversity and their experiences working in the company. Keep notes and report their experiences back to the company as evidence for the need to change the approach or persist with the current approach. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use clear and consistent criteria and language to define the approach to diversity your organization is taking. Is it focused on equity and fairness, accessing new markets, and/or learning from diversity to make employees and the organization more effective? - Be transparent about the approach. Explain the potential value this approach has for employees and for the larger organization while also acknowledging the difficult road ahead and the organization’s openness to feedback. Consider evolving the approach as new information is gained and new opportunities are sought for managing diversity and inclusion. |
| <p>Social identity differences</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflect on your own identities and how they influence the choices you have made about your career, your hobbies, and your dreams. Help others to understand who you are and what motivates you. - Get to know more about others’ identities including your manager’s identities – regardless of whether they seem similar to or different from your own. Invite | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid defining employees solely in terms of overly simplistic demographic categories. Recognize that many people want to be known and understood for their multiple identities and in terms of what makes them unique/distinct from other people. - Get to know your subordinates on a real level as real people with real emotions. How would they like to be identified/defined? How much would they like to incorporate their non-work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add language around “multiple identities/intersectionality” to diversity and inclusion statements that are concerned with individuals’ backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Most people want to be known and understood in more complex ways than organizations currently enable. - Collect and analyze workforce and talent management data with |

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| <p>Social identity differences (continued)</p> | <p>someone who seems different from you to lunch. Aim for achieving an understanding of their experience - not for the purpose of creating the sense that we're all the same or erasing your differences.</p> <p>- Reflect on how you would like to present yourself at work. Are there certain identities you want to include or exclude? Does that depend on the person with whom you are engaging? Does that depend on the situation?</p> <p>- When there is a disconnect between your desired self-presentation and what your organization prefers, figure out a strategy that works best for you: Segment and assimilate? Integrate and validate? Seek “cultural fit”?</p> | <p>selves into their work? How much would they like separation? Find out what you can do as a manager to help them present as authentically/true to self as is meaningful for them at work.</p> <p>- Become more knowledgeable about potential differences in experiences facing those with highly visible, marginalized identities vs. those with less visible, marginalized identities. Ask them what they think can be done in your workplace to improve their experiences.</p> | <p>multiple identities/ intersectionality in mind. Ideally, data are both quantitative and qualitative.</p> <p>- Recognize that authenticity means different things to different people. Some people want to be their “true selves” across context and situation including in the workplace. Others are happy presenting only their work selves. Help employees to understand your perspective on authenticity at work and make sure that you are not creating situations where the expression (or lack thereof) of some identities and experiences are more valued than others.</p> |
| <p>EQUITY AND FAIRNESS</p> | | | |
| <p>Meritocracy and privilege</p> | <p>- Recognize that everyone experiences disadvantage and privilege in some way at work and/or in life. Disadvantage and privilege can be acquired at birth or later in life. Be an ally to others who are less privileged on some dimension – chances are that they will reciprocate and help you out or pay it forward when most critical.</p> | <p>- Set clear criteria and rewards for your subordinates. Make sure you are rewarding people similarly for the same performance on the same criteria.</p> <p>- Remove language about “cultural fit” from talent management and performance evaluation processes.</p> | <p>- Promote organizational accountability and transparency in performance management processes and criteria, outcomes, and audiences. Assign clear roles and responsibilities and determine what should be transparent to whom through which mechanisms.</p> <p>- Remove language about “cultural fit” from talent</p> |

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| <p>Meritocracy and privilege (continued)</p> | | | <p>management and performance evaluation processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant higher authority, power, and status for diversity leaders and diversity recruitment programs in order to assist with the decision-making process of recruiting candidates. Encourage greater collaboration between diversity leaders and hiring managers. |
| <p>Discrimination, bias, and equality of opportunity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge your overt biases. Become more aware of your unconscious biases. Consider situations where they might/can inhibit your success or others' success. - Speak with underrepresented employees about the company you are interested in before the interview and before joining the company. Learn their perceptions of both the opportunities and the challenges in that company as they pertain to each dimension of the talent management process (recruit, select/hire, retain, develop, promote). If hired, recruit these employees as mentors and allies. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write gender neutral, gender balanced, inclusive job ads that focus on objective job requirements. - Have interested candidates meet with a diverse group of employees to help the job candidate gain better insights into the company culture and to help the employees gain better insights into the candidate. - Engage in structured interview practices. Ask the same questions of every job candidate and ask others to do the same. - Adopt a growth mindset. Mentor people from both underrepresented and majority groups. Offer both career advice and psychosocial support. - Engage in data-driven/evidence based talent management practices starting by | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invest in human resource tools and systems designed to de-bias the talent management process. In terms of the hiring process, correcting for bias in job ads, resume screening, and interviewing procedures may be especially helpful for recruiting from a more diverse candidate pool and selecting/hiring a broader range of employees. Consider writing inclusive job descriptions, conducting blind resume reviews, conducting structured interviews, and engaging in data-driven hiring. - Adopt a growth mindset. Conduct broad and diverse candidate searches. See the potential in a wide range of employees as leaders. Base the criteria not solely on a fixed set of |

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| <p>Discrimination, bias, and equality of opportunity (continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seek mentors from both underrepresented and majority groups in and outside of your company to help you see the potential in yourself and in others. - Know that even though you may not have experienced bias or discrimination in that organization, recognize that others may have. Be supportive if someone else discloses this sensitive information to you and encourage them to seek advice from a trusted mentor. - Get to know the equal opportunity employment regulations and policies in the countries and companies where you will be working. - Get involved in grassroots initiatives either at work or outside of work designed to increase equality of opportunity for all. | <p>defining the real criteria for success in the role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a mentor, help your mentees understand when and whether they need to adjust their work styles, patterns, etc. as they seek positions of greater responsibility and leadership. | <p>characteristics such as education and pedigree but also on more growth and strengths oriented criteria such as potential, capacity, and passion for learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a repository of resources for employees related to employment policies and legislation in geographies around the world to help them understand their rights and how those might change in different geographic contexts. Consider how the company might adopt policies for which there is no legal mandate but might help the company to better manage its workforce and develop its talent (e.g., paid parental leave). |
| <p>Integrating a cross-cultural and global lens</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Know that geographic context matters. What might be fine behavior in one country/geographic location might be highly problematic in another (e.g., “mandates” vs. “encouragement”). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance mandates (i.e., “sticks”) and incentives (i.e., “carrots”) when trying to motivate support for diversity and inclusion initiatives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance mandates (i.e., “sticks”) and incentives (i.e., “carrots”) when trying to motivate support for diversity and inclusion initiatives. |

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| <p>Integrating a cross-cultural and global lens (continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be courageous when engaging in cross-cultural and global situations – engaging with the unknown can be anxiety-provoking but keep your eyes on the “pros” as much as you are keeping them on the “cons” and what may seem uncomfortable (or impossible). - Be curious and open to continuous learning from others who are culturally different from you. - Get involved in your company’s diversity and inclusion initiatives. While “top-down” support is important, “bottom-up” engagement is also critical. No part is too small or too insignificant (even if that part is as an audience member!) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engage employees in constructing diversity initiatives and programs – experts and non-experts. They will more likely support what speaks to their own needs. Appealing to the interests of multiple groups vs. one core group can be better in the long-run – wider spread and more lasting change. - Don’t give up on radical cultural change initiatives just because there is resistance. Integrate feedback from those who are uncertain, ambivalent, indifferent, or do not agree with the approach, regroup, and push ahead/persevere. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - While the company’s perspective on diversity should evolve and become more complex in the global context to account for the needs of different audiences, be careful not to dilute messages related to “equity and fairness” in service of messages around “growth opportunities” and “inclusion.” A “both/and” approach can maximize the level and extent of support for a message that is much more multifaceted (i.e., “employee and market development that helps employees and organizations learn from diversity and become more effective”). - Reward and support employees who are committed to cross-cultural and/or continuous learning. - Invest in resources that will help employees become more proficient in non-native languages. |
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| LEARNING AND INTEGRATION | | | |
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| Building effective work relationships across difference | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practice using empathetic statements in your interactions with others: “That must’ve been very frustrating.” - Help someone who is different from you. “Let me know if I can help.” - Engage constructively whenever you perceive that someone has assaulted your identity in some way. - Look for ways to utilize and learn from differences. “That’s different. How do you think we could incorporate that?” - Seek international assignments and learn the local language and customs, even if this scares you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish team norms for approaching differences as an opportunity for learning - Get to know your subordinates as “people” (but respect boundaries that people may have) - Encourage team members to build high quality connections - Build community/service mindset in teams. Engage subordinates in different activities designed to help them to build more effective work relationships across difference. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement diversity training focused on building effective relationships across difference. - Reward helping behavior. - Create initiatives focused on building a culture of empathy, emotional intelligence, and high-quality connections - Create different initiatives focused on learning from multicultural experiences – these can in-person or virtually. |
| Inclusion in organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite people who are typically not included in the social events and diversity initiatives that you attend or organize to attend those events - Find opportunities to develop your ability to see the world through others’ cultural frames (e.g., via conversations, attending events, reading) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite people who are typically not included in social events and diversity initiatives that you attend or organize to attend those events - Give meaningful and constructive feedback to all subordinates. - Pay attention to who is “in” and “out” of the group. Meet with both groups individually and understand their | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create data-driven and targeted diversity and inclusion strategies aimed at addressing firm-specific challenges and opportunities - Create diversity councils, working groups, resource groups, etc. that allow employees and managers at all levels to discuss diversity and inclusion issues facing employees at the firm |

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| <p>Inclusion in organizations (continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask for constructive feedback from different managers and mentors - Learn the art of developing relationships across difference – don't wait for mentors to seek you out. | <p>experiences. Pair members from both groups on projects.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create full cycle talent management approaches that are linked to diversity: recruitment is important and so is retention! - Define and reward “excellent” managers. |
| <p>Creativity and innovation in diverse organizations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Find ways to gain multicultural experiences. Understand and accept the connection to both belong and be different in these situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create teams that are diverse on at least one dimension. -Provide diverse teams with the freedom/autonomy, resources, encouragement, recognition and reward, sufficient time, challenge, and sense of urgency to generate new ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a culture that encourages collaboration and coordination across difference. -Instill a sense of urgency for creativity and innovation. -Reward creativity and innovation. |
| <p>Leading diversity in organizations</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enroll in evidence-based diversity and inclusion training and courses. Attend and organize events related to diversity and inclusion. Bring a friend! - Create informal and formal networks of support that you can enlist to help you and others lead diversity in organizations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend and organize evidence-based events and training related to diversity and inclusion. Reward subordinates for attending. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Devote resources to evidence-based diversity and inclusion training, courses, and events. Hold all leaders accountable to attending, organizing, and supporting these events. Conduct qualitative and quantitative research to understand what effect, if any, these are having on your workforce. |

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Leading diversity in organizations

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- Catalyst: <http://www.catalyst.org/>
- Cornell Certified Diversity Professional/Advanced Practitioner: <https://www.ilr.cornell.edu/human-capital-development/certificates/diversity-and-inclusion-professionals-certificate>
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