

D&I Success has a lot to do with Leadership and Execution!

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Let's talk about Diversity and Leadership. Let's start with some preliminary or basic questions. These are the fundamental "Leaders as Diversity Change Agents" questions that really have to be scrutinized and answered. Don't even start your D&I (diversity and inclusion) efforts without first contemplating what is described below and the implications for you and your firm.

MY TOP 10 LIST - 10 QUESTIONS THAT WILL YOU MAKE YOU THINK AND ENSURE YOUR D&I EFFORTS HAS HIGHEST IMPACT

1. **Have your leaders defined the destination of your diversity journey?** If we value the diversity of our talented workforce and marketplace and we are inclusive what will we look like one day as a firm? Which day, when, do we have a deadline? *END GAME*
2. **Do your leaders lead by example?** Do they show, exhibit and support balanced, fair, open and inclusive human resource policies, procedures, and programs? *CHANGE AGENTS*
3. **If you ask your leaders to define diversity and what it means to be inclusive as a leader and as an organization can they articulate that in 30 seconds or less?** Some call this the elevator speech. Can they do it? Have they done it and been videotaped so we can put it on your website and we can use for recruiting fairs and trade shows? *THE WHAT, 30 SECONDS OR LESS*
4. **Can your leaders articulate your diversity and inclusion strategy and plan?** Do you even have one? Have you placed that strategy and plan on a one-page flyer to used for sourcing, recruiting, hiring, and selection processes? Do you have this on your website? *THE HOW, SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT*
5. **Why are we doing all of this – can they articulate the basic and fundamental business reasons behind your D&I strategy and plan?** I have an MBA, you have to talk in these terms – business development, market share, retention of talent (winning the war for talent), and the most basic – we just want to be a good place to work for everyone! We want to be attracting all of the best talent – from all walks of life. *WHY*
6. **Are you sharing your proof? Your results?** Look, having a D&I strategy and plan is one thing. Execution is quite another. What have you done and what results did you realize? Put it out there. Share your successes or lessons learned. *TRANSPARENCY*
7. **Are you studying what your competition is doing?** It still amazes me when I show my clients my research –"best in their industry" (direct competition) and

“best in country” (best practices period) and they are just shocked at what is being done out there, who is trying what and how far behind they might be if they don’t dive into the deep end fast! The look on the faces of their leaders is very telling. *DON’T RECREATE THE WHEEL – TAKE ANOTHER AND PUT A WHITE WALL ON IT*

8. **Do your leaders participate in your efforts?** Do they come? Do they kick off your efforts? Do they hold people accountable for not attending, not supporting or more importantly for resisting or sabotaging diversity and inclusion efforts? Does your rank and file TRUST your management and leadership? It all fundamentally comes back to trust. I am doing a lot of trust work these days. *ACTIONS ARE LOUDEST*
9. **Do you identify and celebrate (and discuss lessons learned) from your internal D&I best practices?** Do you honor “Change Agent of the Year” or “Departmental best practice (strategic or tactical)? Do you give out awards? Name the award for someone high up who has made great strides. Give a bonus tied to the award(s).
10. **Quite frankly, these diversity best practices (individually) should be tied to your core values, your performance system, and incentivized with both fixed and variable pay.** If you ask me and since you didn’t it – I will put it out there anyway.

Really, I think too many of my colleagues make their D&I efforts too complicated, too mysterious, like some kind of cabal or Star Chamber. Be transparent, spell it out, make it simple to understand and most importantly be clear as to where you are going (destination) and really clarify the why (the business factors driving these efforts).

Some people say D&I efforts are failing. I say this person wants them to fail. Please see my other related article on this topic where I dive into the brutally chilly waters with my honest opinion. This is fail safe work. We can’t fail. Too many organizations are unintentionally trying to fail.

Too many people – increasingly diverse talent entering the workforce and increasingly diverse clients and customers entering the marketplace will just refuse to work for exclusive organizations or buy their products and services. It does not matter if the exclusion or discrimination is intentional or not.

Free market forces will not allow organizations to abandon their D&I efforts. They might call these policies, practices and procedures something else – Best Place To Work, For X – but it is still D&I work.

Don’t think you can move the “Diversity and Leadership needle?” Give me a call.

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