Inclusion – Reducing the Consequences of Identity
By Joe Gerstandt

I have written here frequently and recently about the importance of getting crystal clear on what inclusion means in your organization. One of the big reasons this is so important is that it makes it much easier to then identify specific behaviors and practices that comprise an inclusive employee experience.

This in turn makes it much easier to set expectations, train, develop, and evaluate employees on those behaviors and practices. It gives you something to hold folks accountable to.

All of which makes it easier to provide an inclusive employee experience that is both more consistent and rooted in the right things, such as organizational core values.

Providing a more consistent employee experience is a pretty big opportunity for most organizations.

This is an interesting article about why people leave good-paying technology jobs. The main reason may not surprise you:

"Overwhelmingly, workers of all backgrounds cited 'unfairness or mistreatment' within the work environment as the most common reason for leaving. Thirty-seven percent said it was a 'major factor' in their decision to quit. Unfair treatment was cited twice as often as being recruited elsewhere."

But of special significance to us is what comes next:

"Not surprisingly, the study found that workplace experiences differ dramatically by race, gender, and sexual orientation.

"The Kapor Center found that men of color were the most likely to quit because of unfairness. Forty percent of black and Latino men — both groups are underrepresented in the tech industry — left their jobs for that reason. Nearly a quarter of underrepresented men and women of color said they had experienced racial stereotyping, twice the rate of white and Asian men and women. Black and Latino women were more likely than any other group to say they were passed over for a promotion."

Part of what we are hoping to accomplish through our inclusion efforts is to reduce or remove consequences for real or perceived identity. As this article makes clear, there are real consequences to identity in the workplace. And, as

both Catalyst and the Level Playing Field Institute have shown, this is not unique to the technology industry.

This all continues to happen inside of organizations that consider themselves to be meritocratic, that say people are their most valuable asset. It continues to happen around people who consider themselves non-judgmental and tolerant of others.

Saying those things and even believing them is of no significance unless we link them to behaviors and practices.

Get clear on what the experience of being included means for your organization, then start identifying specific behaviors and practices that create that experience. Now you have something that you can start writing into job descriptions, competency models, development plans, and performance evaluations.
Be good to each other.