

Inclusion Demands Higher Standards

By Joe Gerstandt



Expert Forum



Of the many misperceptions regarding inclusion, the most common might be the idea that inclusion requires you to lower your standards – inclusion somehow means “anything goes.” Not only is there a healthy dose of bias baked into this idea, it is the opposite of the truth.

Inclusion is hard work, it is not the path of least resistance.

Inclusion requires us to become more intentional about our standards in general and in some cases raise them. We have real work to do in making sure that people are not punished (intentionally or otherwise) for who they are or for who they are perceived to be, and also in holding people more fully accountable for their behaviors and actions.

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I have walked into a lot of conference rooms at the invitation of organizations who say tremendous things about inclusion only to be met by folks openly dismissive of the idea. These organizations are either lying about what really matters, **or they are hiring and promoting the wrong people.**

I do not know how many times someone has told me that their executive team really embraces diversity, “they just have not been able to find anyone.”

Seems to me that our expectations are not high enough.

Imagine if your organization missed its sales and revenue goals, and the response from the executive team was “you know we love sales, in fact we embrace sales, we really celebrate sales, we just have not been able to find enough folks willing to buy...it seems some people just don’t want our product.” I think that in most organizations those executives would be invited to leave.

Executive leaders who have built teams, developed new products and services, driven enterprise wide change initiatives, and pursued new markets continue to sit back and act baffled by D&I. And they continue to be let off the hook.

Are the standards high enough in your organization?

Be good to each other, and be good to yourself.