

# Top 5 Strategies To Innovate Your Inclusion Strategy

**Good Leaders Create Value Statements, Great Leaders Live Them Out**

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Despite the strong commitment from many organizations, women remain underrepresented at every level in corporate North America. Progress continues to be slow, and sometimes even discouraging. One of the most powerful reasons for this slowdown is that we have not aligned diversity and inclusion directly to performance results. We can't shift cultures and values without understanding that people follow results. We need to demonstrate how and when diversity moves us forward more clearly and look for opportunities to nudge the culture forward by providing solid examples and role models that the business can use as case studies-in-point.

How can organizations become more inclusive and diverse? Like eating an elephant, we believe it is one bite at a time, one success story at a time, one undeniable result at a time.

In our research and work with top clients, we found the following top five trends that organizations are enhancing or starting to drive their diversity and inclusion effort in 2018.

1. Identifying opportunities to gender-balance teams for special projects. Special projects give organizations opportunities to select non-traditional candidates and to expose high potential talent to broader organizational issues. It also gives executives a first-hand opportunity to work with and evaluate talent for consideration. Making an effort to gender-balance selection for special projects is a non-intrusive, small but powerful opportunity to promote gender equity.
2. Striving for gender-parity for innovation-related projects. Similar to point number one, when selecting candidates for innovation-related projects, gender parity on these types of projects should be the goal. The latest research from London Business School shows that 50/50 teams engaged in innovation-related tasks outperform any other combination. It also gives an opportunity to evaluate talent and get a diversity of viewpoints and experience on the team.
3. Women's networks and women's leadership programs focus on communication, presentation, navigating through the culture and building social capital. These are the skills that are found the most effectively position women in organizations for greater recognition and promotion.
4. Focus on supporting men as allies for diversity and inclusion goals. Supportive programs to give a voice to the men who want to actively participate in driving diversity and inclusion in your organization. We see leading organizations helping men by providing a non-blame forum to deepen understanding of the barriers to inclusion and give tools and strategies of how they can move the conversation forward.

5. Focus on bridging values (personal and organizational) to diversity goals and strategies. Connecting diversity to personal and organizational values is proven to be the most effective method to help drive sustained change. Awareness-driven programs are good, but don't usually have long-term impact. Helping participants to drive change from the lens of their values helps participants view diversity and inclusion as a part of the values they work to achieve.

These five insights are powerful opportunities to both move the diversity and inclusion conversation forward in a positive, results-focused manner that shifts culture by demonstrating respect and results. In the wise words of Bruce Lee, Knowledge will give you power, but character respect. We aim to build character to drive a respectful, engaged workforce.

Contact us for more information.

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