

Diversity vs Inclusion

The first definition of diversity in the Merriam Webster dictionary reads:

“1: the condition of having or being composed of differing elements ... the *inclusion* of different types of people (such as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization”

Evidently, the word “diversity” cannot even be defined without using the word “inclusion.” Although these words are frequently substituted for one another, the reality is that they are inextricable, but not interchangeable. In a group or organization, you need both; you cannot—and *should* not—have one without the other.

In its most basic form, diversity is the presence of differences within a specific group. This group can be, for example, a pile of clothes, a collection of movies, or a species of insects. Inclusion, on the other hand, incorporates the human aspect. This requires respect, an open mind, and acceptance of differences on parts of all members of the group.

Inclusion is not an automatic byproduct of diversity. It is not difficult to assemble a diverse group of people; nor is it difficult to foster a culture that is inclusive to a specific type of person. To do both, to assemble a diverse group of people and foster a culture that is inclusive, is when your team will flourish. All people have different mindsets, different experiences, and different ways of thinking. A diverse and accepted team that feels comfortable sharing their creative ideas will empower and encourage their peers to be the best they can be.

On top of achieving diversity and inclusivity, one must also recognize the difference between equality and equity. Equality is treating everyone the same, giving everyone the same opportunities, and fostering the same skill set, regardless of who they are. Equity is giving every individual what they specifically need to be successful. Meeting your peers and teammates where they’re at and providing them the specific tools they need to succeed creates an equitable workplace, one in which each individual can truly flourish.

Diversity, inclusion, and equity are important buzzwords that have been floating around our industry for some time. But, what really separates a good culture is the presence of all three.

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