

Tips for Leading a Diverse Team



Success is a team sport, and the imperative to communicate, collaborate, and build diverse and inclusive teams has never been greater. Enjoy this guest post by Adrian Johansen.

Now more than ever, companies need to prioritize diversity and inclusion. Gone are the days when diversity was solely regarded as a checkbox to tick. Championing diversity and inclusion is good for innovation, culture, and business. Moreover, the workplace plays a huge part in shaping the lives of its employees and society as a whole, and inclusivity that stems here can spark real change.

Though companies already have diversity on the agenda, the 2020 pandemic and the resulting surge in remote hiring has allowed more businesses to hire across borders. Even when in-

person working picks up, diversity will continue to be upfront and center.

So how does one inculcate inclusion and build diverse teams? The answer points to leadership.

Training management to actively promote a culture of diversity is an ongoing process and here are a few tips that can help:

Understand and address diversity as a spectrum

Often, when you say 'diversity', people think religion, race, gender. While these are all included, companies need to understand that it also extends to diversity in personality, background, age, and sexual orientation. As a leader, learn about and make room for different kinds of diversity, as well as account for the differences that might arise because of it.

Develop empathy

Every employee is different and experiences the workplace differently. The only way to be a leader who factors in these experiences is to learn how to walk a mile in their shoes, and empathize. Many argue that empathy is too emotional for the workplace, but an article by Western Governors University (WGU) makes the case for a healthy emotional balance. To support this point, it points out that when employees feel their leaders empathize with them, they're more productive, more loyal, and happier to come to work. In turn, empathy builds a personal connection and that builds stronger teams.

WGU goes on to say that empathy, though often inherent, can be developed through certain practices. These include learning more about your employees, taking an interest in their ambitions and concerns, stepping out from one's own bubble to consider other perspectives, and so on. And contrary to

misconception, empathy doesn't make a leader soft. It only proves their mettle and their ability to support their team in challenging times, as stated in our previous article on leadership.

Create formal diversity policies

While a company may hire diversely, what are they doing to support their minority employees in the workplace? Creating strategic, thoughtful policies that value, understand, and encourage diverse employees has multiple benefits. First, these are a formal, tangible show of support from the company. Second, they safeguard the well-being of diverse employees and showcase employers' intentions. They also help create transparency and accountability within the workspace.

These policies should be formed by Diversity and Inclusion experts. Policies can be based on non-discrimination and anti-harassment principles like:

- Abusing authority to demean someone or have them perform tasks outside their role.
- Undermining a colleague or refusing to cooperate.
- Discriminating and mistreating someone based on their race, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, etc.
- Passing unwanted and unsavory remarks.
- Spreading rumors, gossiping, or bullying other employees.

And they can also be policies that outline programs, tools, and resources to empower minority employees.

Change your recruitment strategy

The best first step to diversify internally is to change how you hire externally. To make sure your company is more attractive to a diverse workforce, consider changing your recruitment approach by:

- Showcasing your pro-diversity policies: Let candidates know that your workplace is a safe, welcome, and inclusive space.
- Using technology: Minimize human bias by using AI to shortlist candidates based on their qualifications.
- Identifying and overcoming bias: It's important to make sure your recruitment team undergoes tests like the Harvard Implicit Association Test and others, to identify any unconscious bias and work on it.
- Working with partners: Partner up with organizations that champion diverse minorities and can send the best candidates your way.

Take feedback

The only way to understand your team's needs is to listen to them. Set up feedback sessions that empower people to speak up about their concerns or needs. You can do this by having an open-door policy, host town hall meetings, or have anonymous feedback surveys. Regular feedback sessions that are productive and then implemented make for better, happier, and more secure employees and a more cohesive company culture.

Encourage collaboration

Bring together team members that have different backgrounds but complement each other's professional strengths. Encourage open, honest, and respectful debate to fuel creative collaboration. Leaders can also help the foster community by bringing together team members over passions they share outside work!

Measure and evaluate

Managers and leaders should regularly check in with themselves to evaluate if their initiatives are working and what could be

better. Pay attention to how your employees are feeling, what their feedback is, and show them that their inputs and experiences matter. Involve diverse employees when creating programs and policies for them so that it isn't a top-down dialogue, but a collaborative effort that works.

Conclusion

Diverse teams make your company so much stronger, more innovative, and a much more enjoyable workplace. Not only that, diversity boosts business, with studies showing that companies with diverse management report 20% higher innovation revenue as compared with those who don't. Creating and leading a diverse team is not just necessary, it's a given.



Author Bio: Adrian Johansen is a writer and consultant in the Pacific Northwest. She loves sharing knowledge with others and learning along the way. You can find more of her writing [here](#).

Stand Up for What Can Be



It is time to stand up for what can be, rather than looking in despair at what is or what was.

It is time to realize that we have the potential to build a better tomorrow, but it is potential that will not be realized without embracing a new mindset, a new focus that allows us to transform what is into what can be.

Will you be a pioneer, a peaceful warrior, a champion who will join me in celebrating a delicate balance between autonomy and collaboration, a new world of working together with purpose, with passion by building what I call 3Q Strengths?

3Q Strengths? Yes, strengths I built when facing monumental business challenges in an executive career, and personal challenges ranging from illness to tragedy. Strengths that have helped forward-thinking executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs change their lives and the lives of others.

Strengths that have helped me and helped my clients navigate change, difficult challenges, crises and even trauma in ways that drive our best self, best collaboration, best work and most purposeful contribution.

The answers to our problems must reflect strategic thought Q1, emotional dexterity Q2, and the universal values and purpose Q3 that holds our world together. The answers start with developing a relationship with ourselves and with others that builds bridges between what is and what can be; growth mindsets, emotional and cognitive dexterity, and a relentless desire to contribute to be part of a better tomorrow.

What would a better tomorrow look like? What would happen if you could let go of the cloud of negativity and chaos surrounding us and become relentlessly solution focused because the answers to our problems can be found in the ashes of what has failed. In the synergy that is created when great hearts, minds, and people of courage hold hands and hearts.

Pie in the sky? Think again.

Every great movement, every great change, every important learning starts with a dream to do better, to contribute more, and to build a better world. I reach out to you today and always and ask you to dream, to imagine, to visualize what we CAN create and do...together.

Together we can create organizations and communities of purpose founded on transformational thinking, emotional dexterity, and purpose (our 3Q Edge). If you want to lead, if you want to succeed, it is time to know that together we can change the world.

Join the fight for a better tomorrow, or face the peril of being mired in a sea of negativity, fear and ego that can attack even the best and brightest among us. We each have a role to play, no matter how small or large, in building a

better tomorrow.

Get ready for a weekly 3Q post and inspiring quotes on 3Q Leadership Blog starting next week. Carpe diem, inspire yourself, and those you lead to dream, to aspire to what we can create.

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6 Effective Ways to Motivate a Passive Employee



Motivation is key to success on so many levels. Learning to motivate others, is a critical skill. Happy to share this guest post by Angeline Lecerio

The truth is that almost all employees fall into some degree of being passive in their working lifetime. Direct superiors' skills often get tested when they are trying to get passive employees to perform better at work.

To be clear, passive employees are not necessarily bad for the company. This just means that more often than not, these employees need more than just the usual nudge from their managers to have a productive day at work.

What passive really is.

Leaders often think of passive employees as employees that need a push towards the right direction, which in this case, towards productivity. Inactive employees will often tell their managers what they wanted to hear just to get along. In fact, passive employees can be trusted like clockwork to just go about their tasks with nothing more and less. Simply put, they would not put in that extra effort but can still get the job done.

Just because it's not a bad thing does not mean that leaders can just let it go and also be passive about it. There are simple, effective, and proven ways to motivate passive employees in your work. Below are six of the most effective ways of getting employees engaged and being more productive in their respective tasks.

Level the 'paying' field

It may sound like a pun, but it makes a lot of sense. This means that there are industry standards for pay in a specific category of workers – being passive starts to creep its way in when your employees realise that they are being paid less than the average grade in their position. As soon as they realise this, it can be tough to get them to perform at their peak.

If, for some reason, the budget dictates very little wiggle room in terms of salary increases, companies often compensate with non-monetary perks. The point is that when employees perceive that they are being given value, productivity will increase as they feel happier in their work. One of the easiest ways to improve morale in the workplace is by merely aligning your company's salary grid to the industry standard.

Opportunities for self-improvement

Passive employees who are given a glimpse of their potential achievements can be valuable assets to a company as they work their way towards their goals. Having your team attend skills training, even simple ones, can remove passivity and nip any long term problems in the bud. Employees that show potential are prime candidates for leadership training, and giving them the opportunity will not only provide motivation to that particular employee but their co-workers as well.

Providing training to your employees is a win for everybody, often improving morale and productivity. Training does not just deal with a worker's attitude towards his or her work, but you are substantially upgrading your workforce. Corporate training will allow them to move forward with their careers and start to aspire for more.

Maintain open communication

An approachable and open communication policy in the office will often keep management up to date on the office's latest goings-on. This is a valuable tool in keeping the pulse on your workforce so that you can react accordingly. However, the real purpose of fostering open communication is to show your team members that you and the company he or she represents genuinely care about employees' welfare.

Open communication tells them that what they say matters. By hearing employees' suggestions, you engage them and make them feel included. As a leader or superior, you can encourage questions and try to provide answers that will enable them to perform their work more effectively. Gathering input does not necessarily mean listening to each, and every one of your employees tells you about their day. There are other means of getting them, such as during meetings. When you get inputs, make sure to brush up or follow up on them when you get an

opportunity. This will make employees feel that you listened to them, even if you did not actually solve all their problems.

Be a leader, not a boss

Almost all of us have experienced working for that nightmare of a boss, so make sure that your employees will not experience the same thing under your leadership. In short, make sure that you would be someone that you would want to work for. A miserable manager can influence the way a workplace feels and can spoil everyone's day fast.

A leader is always on the positive side of things. If you want to inspire your team, be the example of what a leader should be. A manager sets the mood and tone for how the day will go at the office. Keeping that good vibe going at work reduces stress, and when you are approachable, employees will feel that they can tell you things that may impact the day to day operations in the office. They will feel confident to disclose any challenges and in turn, you can act on these challenges before they turn into huge problems.

Encourage team bonding

Positive employee relations are among the most effective ways to motivate employees. There are a lot of activities you and your team can prepare to make sure that the team bonds on a slightly more personal level. A simple dinner or a night out once a month can do wonders for the morale of your team members. This will also allow you to manage internal conflicts quite easily because you can communicate with your team effectively.

Team activities also help employees feel that the company values healthy work-life balance. A company that respects work-life balance is something rare, and that alone can

refocus anyone who is being demotivated at work.

Appreciation can do wonders

Appreciation does not mean heaping praise on every single task your associates do as it's just impossible and counter-productive to do so. Always appreciate in public and reprimand in private. One does not always have to do it daily, but make sure to find the time to commend team members for their achievements.

This is based on the very essential human psychology trait itself, the need to be appreciated. People love to be appreciated. Thanking an employee, or acknowledging his or her contribution to the team can do miracles in improving that person's productivity.

Final words

Employee motivation is not something management can sweep under the rug. Just following a few of the tips above can help bring about a noticeable change among your employees. Cultivating enthusiasm and motivating employees should be on the list of any company's priorities because it is their teams that will allow them to achieve significant growth and success.

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