



INSIGHTS PAPER

DEI: THE FROZEN MIDDLE: HOW TO ENSURE YOUR DEI INITIATIVES AREN'T GETTING STUCK IN 2023

Middle managers are central to employees' experiences at work, yet when it comes to DEI initiatives this group often feels "left behind" and unconnected from the DEI strategies coming from the top.

DEVELOPED BY
PIERCING STRATEGIES

**““ ———
The grassroots are energized, the executives
have seen the light, and the top-down and
bottom-up momentum comes to a
screeching halt right in the middle girth of most
organizations.**

**Conference Board Business Diversity Council, "Middle
managers: Engaging and enrolling the biggest roadblock to
diversity and inclusion,**

" The Conference Board, April 2007

85%

of managers say they want to be equitable and inclusive.



but only half of employees rate their manager as inclusive.

OUR INSIGHTS

- Positioning DEI as key to “culture change” is too broad for middle managers and not always described in terms of specific and relevant actions.
 - There is still work to be done to ensure managers understand the distinctions between diversity and inclusion. Many believe they are interchangeable concepts.
- Positioning inclusion as “making the mix work well” within a team resonates with middle managers, along with a focus on the behaviors and habits of an inclusive leader.
- Middle managers are told DEI is important by senior leadership, yet it doesn't receive the levels of focus as other areas cause.
 - Performance reviews don't typically reflect DEI work.
 - DEI is usually not a budget allocation or is typically one of the first items cut due to competing priorities.
 - Meeting DEI goals is not usually a cause for promotion like other business objectives.

OUR INSIGHTS

- According to a study of white men and DEI, nearly 70% report feeling “forgotten” by diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.
 - Feeling uncertain about whether DEI includes them is why they either disengage or are not as committed to it as others in their organization.
- Inclusive leaders must remember that even if someone isn't initially supportive of DEI, they can still be reached and enlightened on the issue's importance. We need to lift the fear of exclusion for them.
- For DEI efforts to be sustainable, CIS white men must be engaged and are an absolute necessity in championing these efforts.

SUCCESS STRATEGIES

- Address feedback from middle managers those who feel 'excluded' or left out by DEI strategies.
 - As part of the learning journey, have managers create their own DEI learning objectives
 - Behavior-based allyship training for all managers that are tied to manager OKRs
 - Facilitated real-time conversation circles around the importance of allyship
 - Efforts need to be made to call 'allies in' vs. calling 'allies out.'
- Formalize peer-to-peer leader sharing.
 - Create opportunities for managers to connect with peers with more profound DEI experience so that they can ask questions in a safe environment.
- Share the DEI strategic road map so managers can plan ahead and ask for their input on reaching the organization's goals and objectives.



SUCCESS STRATEGIES

- Allocate specific time for DEI learning and engagement, provide tools and 1:1 coaching.
- Have a one-stop shop for DEI tools. Include relevant scenarios and challenges that will resonate with managers.
- Tie financial rewards to performance and development plans. Embed DEI efforts in performance management systems.
- Train and support managers on HOW to navigate DEI challenges. Evaluate the balance needed between knowledge building and awareness and application.
- Give a highly-respected manager who is ready to be a champion high-profile visibility for their diversity commitment.



QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ENGAGE MIDDLE MANAGERS ON DEI

- What are your business challenges?
- How can diversity and inclusion efforts help you with these business challenges?
- What would you recommend doing differently to make diversity efforts more relevant to your business issues?
- What would be the best way for us to work together to ensure that diversity and inclusion are meeting your needs?
- What is the best way for you to communicate to stakeholders that diversity and inclusion are key to meeting your business needs?
- How can I best help you with all of this as a business partner?

4 KEY TIMES OUR CLIENTS CALL ON US

01 When their leadership pipeline is lacking women and/or talent of color and they don't have a formalized strategy to develop and advance underrepresented groups through their leadership ranks.

02 When they need to roll-out a mission critical or time-sensitive DEI initiative and don't have the bandwidth and/or expertise to do it internally.

03 When employee feedback indicates that people leaders don't have the skills to lead teams inclusively.

04 When they have identified their high-potential talent pool and don't have next-level leadership development programming to support their retention and growth.

We're here to help you get ahead of the curve when it comes to building a more inclusive organization.
[Click here](#) to schedule an intro call with us.

PIERCING STRATEGIES OFFERS A UNIQUE FRESH SOLUTION TO TRANSFORM THE INCLUSIVE HABITS AND BEHAVIORS OF LEADERS

HOW OUR PROGRAM IS DIFFERENT

- Not a one-time event but a solution-focused approach learning journey to link capability to results via performance.
- Focuses on the 'how' of inclusive leadership.
- Participants engage in activities that begin the process of changing their mindset and building positive teams and organizations.

PROGRAM DETAILS

- Activity-based experience with minimal lecture.
- Workshops are customized to each organization.
- Full or half day in-person or virtual versions are available.

AUDIENCE

- Workshops can be adapted for people leaders, individual contributors as well as intact teams.



PROGRAM CONTENT & OBJECTIVES

- Understanding of your organization's inclusive culture goals and expectations of leaders.
- Learn to recognize biases and personal blind spots.
- Ability to adapt leadership to the needs of the team and individuals.
- Ability to build trust across all team members.
- Ability to make cultural differences a resource for learning
- Ability to coach team members and provide feedback that resonates with the recipient.
- Build an action plan toward inclusive leadership strategies to achieve impact.

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