

LEARNING MADE EASY



Inclusive Leadership

for
dummies[®]

A Wiley Brand



Realize the business
benefits of inclusive leadership

—
Cultivate inclusivity, trust, and
high performance at work

—
Enhance your
skills and competencies

Shirley Davis, PhD

Global leadership and
talent management expert,
Hall of Fame speaker



Inclusive Leadership

by Shirley Davis, PhD

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Inclusive Leadership For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2024 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit <https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024935004

ISBN 978-1-394-19723-1 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-19724-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-394-19725-5 (ebk)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
Icons Used in This Book	3
Beyond the Book	4
Where to Go from Here	4
PART 1: GETTING STARTED WITH INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	7
CHAPTER 1: Establishing the Basics of Leadership and Inclusion	9
Knowing Why Inclusive Leadership is Important	10
Summarizing Key Workforce Shifts	13
Understanding Inclusive Terminology	15
Belonging	15
BIPOC	15
Diversity	16
Equity and Equality	17
Implicit bias	18
Inclusion	18
Intersectionality	18
Microaggressions	19
Neurodiversity	19
Phobias and -isms	19
Looking at Leadership Models and Frameworks	20
CHAPTER 2: Revealing What the New Generation of Talent Needs at Work	25
Understanding the Workforce Demographics of the Future	26
Addressing the Needs of the Changing Workforce	29
Honing the Competencies and Key Traits of an Inclusive Leader	33
Tackling the Challenges of Leading a More Diverse Workforce	35
Unconscious bias	35
Communication barriers	36
Cultural differences impeding teamwork	36
Retaining diverse talent	37
Developing inclusive leaders from within	37
Recognizing the Benefits that Top Talent of the Future Brings	38

CHAPTER 3:	Making the Business Case for More Inclusive Leaders	41
	Accessing a Larger Talent Pool	42
	Enhancing Financial Performance and Company Reputation	44
	Boosting Employee Engagement, Productivity, and Retention	45
	Driving Innovation and Creativity	47
	Growing Customer Loyalty and Expanding New Markets	49
	Digging into Examples of Inclusive Leadership in Action	50
	Biases and lack of visible diversity	50
	Microaggressions and a hostile work environment	51
CHAPTER 4:	How Inclusive Are You? Assessing Your Effectiveness as a Leader	53
	Understanding Why Assessing Yourself is Important	54
	Identifying Your Passion and Ability to be an Inclusive Leader	57
	Assessing Your Unique Leadership Skills and Talents	58
	Identifying Your Leadership Style	59
	Selfless leadership style	59
	Transformational leadership style	60
	Transactional leadership style	60
	“Laissez Faire” leadership style	61
	Democratic leadership style	61
	Situational leadership style	62
	Building Your Personal Brand and Reputation	62
	Why building a strong personal brand matters	63
	Why your reputation as a leader matters	63
	Strengthening your personal leadership brand	64
	Diagnosing Your Level of Inclusiveness	66
	PART 2: DEVELOPING THE SKILLS TO LEAD YOURSELF	67
CHAPTER 5:	Getting Clear on Your Purpose, Vision, and Values	69
	Knowing the Importance of Your Purpose	70
	Asking the Right Questions to Uncover Your “Why”	71
	Getting Grounded on Your Personal Vision Statement	74
	Establishing and Living Your Personal Values	75
CHAPTER 6:	Minimizing Your Own Biases and Microaggressions	79
	Defining Unconscious Bias	80
	Figuring Out Microaggressions	82
	Understanding Intent versus Impact	84

Identifying the Effects of Bias in the Workplace	86
Sourcing and selecting new talent	87
Onboarding and orienting new talent	88
Developing, promoting, and engaging talent	89
Communicating with talent	90
Retaining top talent.	90
Interrupting Biased Behaviors.	91
Step 1: Recognize when a bias has occurred.	92
Step 2: Validate or invalidate your bias	93
Step 3: Chart your path forward	94
CHAPTER 7: Leading with Authenticity and Transparency	97
Defining Authenticity and Transparency and Seeing How They Relate	98
Authenticity	98
Transparency	99
Understanding Why Some Leaders Shy Away from Authenticity and Transparency	100
Analyzing Your Effectiveness as an Authentic and Transparent Leader	100
Mastering Authentic and Transparent Leadership.	105
CHAPTER 8: Demonstrating Empathy and Emotional Intelligence	109
Understanding Empathy and its Role in Leadership	110
Digging into the Three Types of Workplace Empathy	112
Cognitive empathy	112
Emotional empathy.	113
Compassionate empathy	114
Being an empathetic leader.	114
Figuring Out the Four Domains of Emotional Intelligence	115
Self-awareness.	116
Self-control	117
Social awareness	118
Relationship management.	119
Discovering Your Level of Empathy and Emotional Intelligence	120
Realizing the Need for Greater Empathy and Emotional Intelligence	124
Applying Empathy and Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace	127
CHAPTER 9: Developing Cross-Cultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence	129
Defining Culture.	130
Knowing the Difference between Cultural Competence and Cultural Intelligence.	132

Discovering Why these Competencies Matter to Leaders	135
Mapping the Two Mindsets of Intercultural Competence	136
Monocultural mindset	136
Intercultural mindset	136
Exploring the Five Orientations of Cultural Competence	137
Denial	138
Polarization	139
Minimization	140
Acceptance	141
Adaptation	142
Becoming a Culturally Competent and Culturally Intelligent Leader	143
PART 3: LEADING OTHERS	145
CHAPTER 10: Assembling and Leading Diverse and Hybrid Teams	147
Sourcing Diverse Talent	148
Acclimating New Hires to the Team	150
Leading Your Team Through Five Stages of Development	151
Forming	151
Storming	152
Norming	153
Performing	154
Adjourning	155
Figuring out what stage your team is at	156
Maximizing the Benefits of a Diverse Team	157
Creativity and problem solving	158
Collaboration	158
Increased business performance	158
Engagement and retention	159
Fostering an Environment of Trust and Belonging	159
Leading Across Differences and Distances	160
Avoiding Common Pitfalls when Leading a Diverse Team	164
CHAPTER 11: Establishing Trust and Psychological Safety	167
Defining Trust and Psychological Safety	168
Outlining the Four Stages of Psychological Safety	169
Inclusion Safety	170
Learner Safety	171
Contributor Safety	172
Challenger Safety	173

Realizing the Benefits of a Trusting and Psychologically Safe Workplace	175
Identifying the Factors that Drive and Undermine Psychological Safety	176
Factors that undermine trust and psychological safety.	176
Factors that cultivate trust and psychological safety.	178
Creating Psychological Safety	179
Increasing Inclusion Safety.	179
Increasing Learner Safety.	180
Increasing Contributor Safety	180
Increasing Challenger Safety	180
Measuring Psychological Safety	181
Recognizing Best Practice Companies	182
Pixar: “Fail Early and Often”	182
Eileen Fisher: “Leadership is About Listening”	183
Barry-Wehmiller: “What We Do Matters”	183
X Development LLC: “Shoot for the Moon”	184
CHAPTER 12: Coaching and Giving Feedback	185
Acknowledging the Impact of Not Providing Coaching and Feedback.	186
Understanding the Difference between Coaching and Feedback.	187
Customizing Your Coaching Approach using Situational Leadership	189
Telling	190
Selling	190
Participating	191
Delegating.	191
Avoiding Common Feedback Pitfalls	191
Being unprepared	192
Failing to establish trust	192
Ignoring cultural context	192
Treating everyone the same way	193
Avoiding reciprocal feedback.	193
Giving Great Feedback	194
Before the conversation.	194
During the conversation.	194
After the conversation	196
CHAPTER 13: Communicating Inclusively	199
Recognizing the Benefits of Inclusive Communication	200
Understanding the Impact of Non-Inclusive Language	200

Working With Human Resources to Promote Inclusive Language	204
Practicing Inclusive Communication.	205
CHAPTER 14: Dealing with Conflict	207
Addressing the Reasons We Avoid Conflict	207
Normalizing Conflict as a Tool for Higher Performance	208
Identifying the Topics We Tend to Avoid	209
Seeing the Benefits of Engaging in Uncomfortable Conversations	212
Interpreting Two Models for Managing Conflict	213
Thomas–Kilman conflict modes	213
Intercultural Conflict Styles	216
Applying Best Practices to Real-World Scenarios	219
Do you need to engage?	220
What is the source of the conflict? Where do you stand?	220
How will you engage?	220
What is the preferred outcome?	221
What barriers currently exist?	221
What are the implications globally or among multiple stakeholders?	222
PART 4: CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION AND HIGH PERFORMANCE	223
CHAPTER 15: Assessing the Employee Experience	225
Defining the Employee Experience	226
Evaluating the Current State of Your Company Culture	228
Checking Out the Culture Spectrum	230
Exploring the Red Zone	230
Stepping into the Green Zone	233
Applying Strategies to Address Gaps in the Employee Experience	235
Demonstrating Accountability as a Leader	236
Consistency matters	238
Taking ownership matters	238
Sound decision making matters	239
Providing feedback matters	240
Communicating effectively matters	241
CHAPTER 16: Tracking and Measuring Inclusion Initiatives	243
Bridging the Accountability Gap	244
Recognizing the Importance of Measuring Inclusion Initiatives	245
Looking at Ways to Measure Inclusion Initiatives	246

Recruitment and selection	246
Development, advancement, and retention	247
Employee engagement and job satisfaction	249
Compensation and benefits.	250
Employer brand	251
Supply chain and procurement	253
Avoiding Common Pitfalls When Measuring Inclusion Initiatives	254
CHAPTER 17: Advocating for Inclusion	257
Differentiating Between Advocacy and Activism	257
Understanding Why Advocacy Is Needed	259
Defining the Role of an Ally	261
Identifying Multiple Methods of Advocating	262
Launching and leading Employee Resource Groups	262
Championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion education	264
Mentoring and sponsoring diverse talent	265
Seeking and leveraging diverse perspectives and solutions.	267
Demonstrating courage in difficult and unpopular situations.	268
CHAPTER 18: Applying an Equity Lens and Inclusive Mindset in Decision Making	271
Differentiating Equity from Equality	272
Understanding Why an Equity Lens Matters.	274
Asking the Right Questions When Applying an Equity Lens	276
In leading people.	277
In everyday decision making	278
In recruiting	279
In onboarding and orienting new talent	280
In education and training.	281
In development and advancement.	281
In organizational communications	282
In community and customer relations.	283
In marketing and branding	284
Developing Competencies for Applying an Equity Lens	284
PART 5: THE PART OF TENS	289
CHAPTER 19: Ten Mistakes to Avoid if You Want to Be an Inclusive Leader	291
Lacking Vision and Goals	292
Treating Everyone the Same	292
Showing Favoritism.	293

Acting Inflexibly	294
Being a Know-It-All	294
Overlooking Recognition or Reward.	295
Failing to Provide Feedback to All	295
Overlooking Microaggressions	296
Ignoring Psychological Safety	296
Failing to Develop Cultural Competence	297
CHAPTER 20: Ten Things That Inclusive Leaders Must Navigate	299
Leading through Global Socio-Political and Economic Unrest	299
Enhancing The Employee Experience.	300
Attracting and Retaining Top Diverse Talent.	301
Supporting Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being	301
Upskilling to Meet the Needs of the New Generation of Talent.	302
Transforming Workplace Culture to be More Inclusive.	302
Working with Artificial Intelligence and Automation	303
Managing Remote and Flexible Work.	303
Leading Change in Tumultuous Times.	304
Saying the Wrong Thing	305
CHAPTER 21: Ten Practices that Inclusive Organizations Have in Common	307
Maintaining a Positive Employer Brand and Reputation.	308
Embedding Inclusion into Strategic Priorities	308
Assessing Employee Experience	309
Leading Change with Agility and Resilience.	309
Educating and Developing Leaders at All Levels Consistently	310
Removing Organizational Barriers to Equity and Inclusion.	310
Fostering Trust, Psychological Safety, and Well-Being.	311
Assembling and Leading Diverse Teams for Maximum Performance	311
Tracking, Measuring, and Holding Each Other Accountable.	312
Recognizing and Rewarding Top Performance.	312
INDEX	313

Introduction

“If you are a leader and no one is following you, you’re just taking a walk.”

This is one of my favorite quotes to live by and one that I coach leaders all over the world. The reality is, at the core of effective leadership is the expectation that you meet the needs of a new generation of talent that brings different ways of working, thinking, believing, and behaving; that you demonstrate the kind of skills and competencies that engender followers; that you grow others into effective leaders; and cultivate the kind of work environment that brings out the best in others and drives high performance. Today, effective leadership begins and ends with inclusive leadership. And successful organizations recognize that in order to attract and retain top talent, enhance the employee experience, drive innovation and creativity, and meet the changing needs of their customers, they must have inclusive leaders who are knowledgeable and skilled at working across differences.

I have been preparing to write this book all of my personal and professional life because of the experiences I’ve had, the challenges I’ve overcome, and the expertise and knowledge that I have acquired. Writing this book is a labor of love because it is my life’s work of more than three decades as a corporate executive, certified HR and leadership consultant, a global workforce expert, a Toastmasters International Golden Gavel recipient, and an inductee into the Inclusion Hall of Fame. And on a personal note, I am a woman of color, a single mom, a person of faith (licensed and ordained minister), a big sister to three brothers, a daddy’s girl, a movie buff, a dog mom, an HGTV junkie, and a world traveler. This intersectionality of my life has produced a myriad of life lessons that have shaped and formed me into the person I am today and how I see and experience the world. Although it wasn’t an easy road, it led me to my destiny of writing this book. I share my experiences throughout this book because, as I discover with live audiences around the world, it is still the experience of many others who may be members of the same communities that I am part of and who may share some of my same diverse characteristics and attributes. This is important because storytelling has become an important bedrock of inclusive leadership as a way to demonstrate greater trust, increase psychological safety, and build deeper and more meaningful relationships — all of which are lacking today.

About This Book

Inclusive Leadership For Dummies helps leaders successfully navigate the nuances and complexities of a changing, global, and more diverse workforce and create a culture where all talent can thrive. It provides you with the knowledge, tools, and strategies to ensure that all employees are treated fairly, and feel included, valued, safe, and can do their best work. It contains answers to the many questions that leaders ask and the plethora of concerns and misnomers that exist, and it demystifies inclusion to make it practical, understandable, and implementable. There is something here for all levels of leader. It speaks directly to people leaders, senior and executive leaders, and middle managers. It also speaks to emerging and aspiring leaders and to seasoned long-term leaders.

However, this book is not designed to be a blanket prescription for implementing strategies and tips. Every organization is at (and in) a different place, working at a different pace, and has varying degrees of resources, complexities, and levels of commitment. Therefore, this isn't a one-size-fits-all reference guide. Use it to find information, ideas, and guidance for where you are and to help you get to where you want to go on your inclusion journey. Use it to evolve your own thinking and behaviors, and get comfortable with disruption, difference, and change, so toss out the one-size-fits-all leadership approaches, because the workforce is not a monolith — it's a rich and beautiful tapestry made up of people from all backgrounds, cultures, skills, and experiences.

I cover topics relevant for CEOs, executives, board members, and general staff, such as the business case for inclusive leadership, assembling and leading diverse and hybrid teams, demonstrating empathy, authenticity, and transparency, dealing with conflict, communicating inclusively, and much more. To help you navigate the content, I've divided this book into five parts:

- » **Part 1: Getting Started with Inclusive Leadership.** In this part I lay the groundwork with the basics of what effective and inclusive leadership looks like and why it is a relevant business need.
- » **Part 2: Developing the Skills to Lead Yourself.** This part focuses on you, the leader within. It's a jumping off place for how to be effective in leading others by first knowing how to lead yourself.
- » **Part 3: Leading Others.** After doing the internal work in Part 2, this part helps you to hone the skills necessary to lead others effectively.
- » **Part 4: Cultivating a Culture of Inclusion and High Performance.** This part brings in the accountability factor. It details ways to measure your progress

and success in the area of inclusion and equity, and how to continue to influence positive change.

- » **Part 5: The Part of Tens.** This part highlights additional lessons, strategies, and food for thought in your role as an inclusive leader.

Foolish Assumptions

You know what they say about making assumptions, but while it might be a common idiom, in this case allow me to make a few in an effort to best serve your needs. While writing this book I assumed the following:

- » You chose this book because you recognize that today's talent and the future generation expects to work for an inclusive leader.
- » You may not have been through any significant training on this topic and are curious about what it means and how to be more inclusive.
- » You are an emerging or aspiring leader, or have recently taken on a new role as a leader, or are a seasoned leader, and understand the importance of upskilling and reskilling so that you remain relevant, competitive, and effective.
- » You have some reservations and maybe even a little resistance as to why this topic is so important, and you want clarity and some practical insights.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, icons in the margins highlight certain types of valuable information that call for your attention. Here are the icons you'll encounter and a brief description of each:



TIP

This icon alerts you to helpful hints that may save you time, effort, stress, embarrassment, and money while implementing inclusion initiatives and developing into an inclusive leader.



REMEMBER

This icon marks information that's especially important to know. To siphon off the most important information from each chapter if you're in a hurry, just read through these icons and skim the rest of the text for useful tidbits.



This icon marks information of a more technical or data-driven nature that is essential crunchy reading for those who like to dig a little deeper and discover the details behind the headlines. Other readers may simply prefer the headlines!



Watch out! This icon marks important information that may save you headaches, time, and money, and helps you hurdle those obstacles that appear where you least expect to find them.

Beyond the Book

In this book I provide a plethora of ideas on inclusion and leadership that gives you a solid foundation from which to lead. But there's more. You can access additional resources and tools online at Dummies.com. Check out this book's online Cheat Sheet. Just go to www.dummies.com and search for "Inclusive Leadership For Dummies Cheat Sheet."

If you, your team, or other leaders in your organization need additional resources, education, training, or any consulting services on the topics discussed in this book, be sure to reach out to me at www.drshirleydavis.com. I also encourage you to get a copy of my book *Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion For Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2022) so that you have a companion book with even more tips, tools, and strategies. Additionally, I've developed a LinkedIn learning course to complement this book: *Inclusive Leadership*. There you will see and hear me share more of my strategies and tips for being a more inclusive leader.

Where to Go from Here

If you are new to the topic of inclusion, I recommend that you start at Chapter 1 to understand the basic terms leaders need to know and Chapter 3 to help you understand the business case behind inclusive leadership. This book is not linear, so feel free to access it like a workbook or reference guide, perusing the Table of Contents for a list of all the great topics covered and selecting the ones that best meet your needs now.

The world continues to change and situations arise that require leaders to have the knowledge and insight to act appropriately and immediately — and this book provides both. You may need to know how to use inclusive language to avoid making others feel minimized, insulted, or disregarded. If so, jump to Chapter 13. If you are working on establishing a more psychologically safe work environment,

go to Chapter 11. If you want to assess your own level of effectiveness as an inclusive leader, Chapter 4 will help you. And if you have some consternation about coaching and giving feedback to someone who is different from you, Chapter 12 gives great tips for how to do so. These are just a few examples, but my point is that this book encompasses all you need to know about leading more inclusively.

It is not my expectation that after reading this book you will be an expert on inclusive leadership — that takes years of practice, learning, and achieving success. However, I do hope that I answer many of your questions and clear up confusion about inclusion and leadership. It is my desire that you are better positioned to treat all talent as unique and valued members of your team and to show a measurable impact of how being a more inclusive leader has made the lives of those you work with and lead more welcoming, trusting, and enriching. In fact, I hope that you can earn the title that too few leaders have, and that is “Best boss ever.” It is one that I hold with the highest regard and work hard every day with my team to maintain. I hope you will too.

1 Getting Started with Inclusive Leadership

IN THIS PART . . .

Discover the basics of what effective and inclusive leadership looks like, how it is changing, and why it is a relevant business need.

Uncover the changing needs, expectations, and ways of working, thinking, and communicating with the new generation of talent today and in the future. Identify the skills and competencies that they look for in a leader.

Explore the many benefits that inclusive leadership offers and discover ways that you can drive greater worker performance, engagement, creativity, and retention.

Assess your strengths and areas for improvement in demonstrating inclusiveness as a leader. Identify ways that you can further develop into the kind of leader we all want to work for.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Discovering why you should become an inclusive leader
- » Looking at the changing demands of today's workforce
- » Breaking down the terminology associated with inclusiveness
- » Checking out common leadership models and frameworks

Chapter **1**

Establishing the Basics of Leadership and Inclusion

I'm so glad that you're holding a copy of this book! It means that you are serious and curious about learning the nuts and bolts of leading more inclusively. It means you realize that as the workforce becomes more global, diverse, hyper-connected, and work gets done in different ways and from different locations, the need for more inclusive leadership is imperative.

You may have heard that we have a leadership gap, an accountability gap, and an inclusion gap. Most organizations are still reporting that they are making slow progress in their culture transformation efforts; a few report that they are making steady progress; and far fewer are making substantial progress. The main reasons are because transformation is hard, especially if your organization is rigid, hierarchical, risk-averse, and predominantly homogeneous. The other reasons are because of a lack of training and education, and the pace of change. Leaders say that they can't keep up and have not invested in their skill building at the same pace that change is happening. It can feel like a vicious cycle or like Groundhog Day but it cannot continue if organizations want to remain competitive, want to become great places to work, and want to achieve sustainable success.



REMEMBER

Now more than ever, inclusive leadership must become the new normal. It must become a leadership responsibility and a performance expectation that is as common as managing projects and serving customers. From the boardroom to the *C-Suite* (the group of high-level executives within a company, typically having titles that begin with “Chief”), to the front lines, leaders must shift their mindsets, and adopt new skillsets in order to meet the demands of the global changing marketplace, workplace, and the communities in which they do business.

This chapter introduces you to the fundamentals of leadership and inclusion, and acts as a stepping off point for what you’ll discover in other chapters. It explains why these are critical in driving high performance for the changing workforce, and it acts as the basis from which to develop and demonstrate the skills and competencies that top talent are demanding.

Knowing Why Inclusive Leadership is Important

I work with organizational leaders all around the world and, over the past few years, my firm has conducted hundreds of organizational audits, staff focus groups, listening sessions, and training programs to assess the employee experience and the state of the workplace culture. What we have found to be the most common denominator among those thousands of workers is a lack of inclusive leadership. Organizations today are dealing with some significant workplace issues — everything from the inability to attract top diverse talent, to working amid a hybrid work environment, to low employee engagement, to decreased trust, to high turnover.



REMEMBER

From Price Waterhouse’s 2023 *Global CEO Survey* that is published each year (<https://www.pwc.com/us/en/library/ceo-survey.html>), to Bain & Company’s recent report on *The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture* (<https://www.bain.com/insights/the-fabric-of-belonging-how-to-weave-an-inclusive-culture/>), to numerous research studies from the Society for Human Resource Management (www.shrm.org), there are common workplace and people issues that all organizations are dealing with and the top two solutions to most of them are the need for more inclusive leaders and the need to transform workplace culture to be more welcoming, respectful, and equitable. Other common inclusion issues, thankfully covered in this book, include:

- » Attracting and increasing the pipeline of diverse talent (see Chapter 12).
- » Assessing the employee experience (see Chapter 15).

- » Dealing with flexible work and connecting with a remote and hybrid workforce (see Chapter 10).
- » Tracking the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation's impact on future skill gaps (see Chapters 2 and 20).
- » Responding to social, economic, geopolitical and social justice issues at work (see Chapter 20).
- » Embracing mental health, and ensuring emotional well-being (see Chapter 20).
- » Acting as an ally, advocate, and sponsor (see Chapter 17).
- » Fostering a psychologically safe workplace (see Chapter 11).
- » Upskilling and reskilling for the future of work (see Chapters 2 and 20).
- » Having tough and uncomfortable conversations (see Chapters 13 and 14).



TIP

These are not in any particular order but I encourage you to consider which of them are you dealing with as a leader, and which of them is your organization facing. Keep these at the top of mind and jot down tips and strategies as I address them.

Also recognize that if these issues are not dealt with, they will compromise your chances of attracting top talent and keeping what you currently have. Today's top talent has options about where and how they work and the type of leader that they want to work for. And they are revealing their expectations and experiences in talent management research studies published by global consulting firms, in the hundreds of staff surveys and focus groups my firm has conducted as well as on worker platforms such as [Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com) and Google reviews, and in online chat rooms on social media.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Unfortunately, feedback reveals that inclusive leaders seem to be elusive beasts in the workplace safari. According to research by Korn Ferry, only 5 percent of leaders worldwide demonstrate inclusive characteristics. According to Bain & Company's research, fewer than 30 percent of employees feel fully included — a finding that holds across industries, geographies, and demographic groups, including members of racial, gender, or sexual orientation majorities. In that same study it found that inclusive organizations have an easier time attracting talent across demographics: Approximately 65 percent of people across identity groups view an inclusive environment as “very important” when considering new roles.

Moreover, respondents in more inclusive organizations are much more likely to feel free to innovate and to feel comfortable challenging the status quo — and the gains in creative thinking are much higher as inclusion increases in an organization, compared with the gains from increasing diversity alone. This is a compelling business case for why we all need to focus on this topic right now, and you'll find out more in Chapter 3. I mentioned at the start of this chapter that we have a leadership and inclusion gap — these studies affirm that notion.

I get it. Becoming an inclusive leader isn't as easy as it sounds. Inclusive leadership is much more than having a title, giving a hug, and being nice. It requires a paradigm shift, an openness to different ways of doing things, leaning into some discomfort, and demonstrating courage to embrace the unfamiliar. Many leaders have neither the basic foundational knowledge about inclusive leadership, nor an idea of what workers expect in their leaders today.

Becoming an inclusive leader means leaning into some discomfort and demonstrating courage to embrace the unknown and the unfamiliar. It requires intentionality. It demands an openness to different ways of thinking and doing things. It also means adopting new skillsets and broadening your knowledge base. So while we all have a lot to learn, with commitment and dedication and using this book as your resource, you can get there.

LEADING LIKE AN EAGLE

I believe that we can learn a lot about inclusive leadership from eagles. I believe that there are important parallels between the features, attributes, and characteristics of eagles and the qualities of effective and inclusive leaders. Consider the following parallels:

- **Having great vision.** One of the most striking features of eagles is that they have exceptional vision. An eagle's eyesight is four to eight times stronger than that of an average human. They can focus on things more than three miles away and are rarely distracted, which is a demonstration of their visionary capabilities. Similarly, inclusive leaders are visionary leaders who communicate a compelling picture of the future that inspires their team and promotes commitment to their goals. Inclusive leaders will see the vision through to completion and will not lose focus even in times of change. I talk a lot more about this in Chapter 5.
- **Navigating stormy turbulence.** Eagles fly higher than all other birds due to their superior strength, and they love to fly during storms. They are known for their remarkable ability to not only endure but thrive in stormy weather. The inclination of eagles to soar through storms can be attributed to several factors. First, they use the winds gathered by a storm to fly even higher while most other birds are taking shelter and waiting for fairer skies. Second, their mastery of flying in storms is attributed to their strong wings and agile maneuvering capabilities. And third, the choice of eagles to fly in storms may also be linked to their predatory instincts. Storms can disorient prey and make hunting more accessible for eagles. Relative to inclusive leaders, they are not afraid of turbulence, uncertainty, or the storms of life because instead of battling them, they take them in stride and move forward. In the realm of inclusive leadership, storms or challenging situations represent diversity,

adversity, and varying perspectives within a team or organization. Inclusive leaders harness the strength derived from diverse viewpoints, enabling their teams to rise above challenges with collective resilience. They are also able to navigate their team through these disruptive times and to seize opportunities that others might overlook. For more on these traits, check out Part 2.

- **Exhibiting fearlessness.** The eagle is renowned for its unconquerable spirit, demonstrating a steadfast determination to persevere, irrespective of the strength or size of its prey. Eagles are tremendously territorial. If another bird gets too close, the eagle fights ferociously. Even when faced with the most daunting challenges, they relentlessly protect their territory. Similarly, inclusive leaders must choose their battles, but when the fight matters, they can model themselves on an eagle's tenacity. For me, this is always important when it comes to values. My beliefs in inclusion and the inherent dignity of every human being on my team and among the clients I serve are unshakeable. See Chapter 14 on dealing with conflict and Chapter 5 for getting clear on your purpose, vision, and values.
- **Being attentive and nurturing.** Eagles have well-deserved reputations for ferocity but are in fact very attentive parents to their eaglets — in fact, they are among the gentlest birds in the animal kingdom when related to their young. When teaching an eaglet to fly, an eagle will first model the way, only encouraging their young to glide on the wind when they're ready. When ready for flight, the parent eagle hovers just below, ready to catch them if necessary. Inclusive leaders who face all their challenges with strength and audacity can learn a lot from eagles in this regard. They should pay attention to their staff, encourage them to grow, let them fly on their own, but never force them to do something that would compromise their health or safety. I cover more on this topic in Chapters 7 and 12.

There are several more attributes that I could include but I think you get the point and can understand why eagles have long been admired for their ability to develop and train, their exceptional vision, and their mastery of flight, and their caring nature. These abilities make them extraordinary leaders in the avian world and if we can learn and develop some of these same skills, we too can be extraordinary leaders in our organizations.

Summarizing Key Workforce Shifts

Workforce predictions for 2030 and beyond are quite informative. Major global consulting firms have conducted extensive research on the future of work and how it will impact workers and leaders. The research findings provide insight into how dramatically different things will be and what new skills, habits, and behaviors people need to adopt in order to remain relevant, competitive, and sustainable.

The workforce is becoming increasingly more diverse with an aging population, multiple generations in the workforce at the same time with the younger generation making up over half of the working population, and more women attending and graduating college yet nowhere near parity in pay or representation in senior leadership roles or heads of corporations. Racial diversity is growing in many nations. According to a recent survey conducted by Pew Research Center (<https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/04/22/how-people-around-the-world-view-diversity-in-their-countries>), approximately 69 percent of people surveyed across 27 nations said their respective nations have grown more diverse over the last 20 years. Close to half of survey respondents say that they favor a more racially diverse nation.

The workforce is also becoming increasingly more digital. Automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are replacing human tasks. This move changes the skills people need to succeed in the workplace. Price Waterhouse's *Workforce of the Future* report (<https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/workforce/publications/workforce-of-the-future.html>) indicates the following:

- » Thirty Seven percent of workers are concerned that automation puts their jobs at risk.
- » Seventy Four percent of workers are ready to learn new skills or retrain.
- » Sixty percent of workers think long-term employment won't be an option for the future.
- » Seventy Three percent of workers think technology can't replace the human brain.

A few more notable predictions about the future workforce of 2030 and beyond include:

- » Our world is rapidly growing older. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, people aged 65 or older is projected to reach 1.5 billion by 2050.
- » Artificial intelligence may replace jobs humans once held and create jobs that didn't exist before.
- » Employers may recruit global, contract-based workers instead of employing full-time workers. Traditional offices and corporate headquarters may go by the wayside.
- » Traditional retirement will peter out as workers continue working as long they can.
- » Workers will demand more comprehensive benefits and "best place to work" environments, which may lead to job hopping.

Understanding Inclusive Terminology

Even as I write this book, things are changing so rapidly that it's time to update a few things that I wrote my previous first book, *Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion for Dummies* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2022). I continue to be amazed at how much I still need to learn even after over 30 years, as new terminology, strategies, and resources are introduced.



REMEMBER

The important thing to remember is that it is a marathon and not a sprint. Everyone is on their journey; they just happen to be at different mile markers along the way. An important place to start on this journey is understanding the common terminology associated with inclusion so that you have a working knowledge and can at least hold a conversation about it. I only focus on key definitions as there are many and I could write another book on terminology alone!

Belonging

Belonging is a fundamental human need — the desire to feel a sense of security, safety, and acceptance as a member of certain groups. Belonging is what allows employees to feel like they can be their authentic selves without fear of punishment or without having to cover up and be someone they're not. Workers report that when they feel belonging, they can be more productive.

If this definition sounds a lot like the ones I introduce for diversity and inclusion, keep in mind one of the mantras that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professionals use to distinguish the three:

Diversity is having a seat at the table; inclusion is having a voice; and belonging is having that voice be heard.

BIPOC

The term *BIPOC* gained a lot of traction and visibility over social media following national protests for social justice and equity. The term describes any group of people native to a specific region — people who lived in a given region before colonists or settlers arrived. It's used to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice. BIPOC stands for Black and Indigenous People of Color and is pronounced “by-poc.” Here's a breakdown:

- » *Black* can refer to dark-skinned peoples of Africa, Oceania, and Australia or their descendants — without regard for the lightness or darkness of skin tone — who were enslaved by white people.

- » *Indigenous* refers to ethnic groups native to the Americas who were killed en masse by white people.
- » *People of color* is a term primarily used in the United States and Canada to describe any person who is not white.

Diversity

Simply put, *diversity* is the collection of unique attributes, traits, and characteristics that make up individuals. They include values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, religion, behaviors, race, gender, abilities, socioeconomic status, physical appearance, age, and so on. Some of these traits are visible, and many others are invisible.



TIP

For decades, I've been defining diversity as being comparable to an iceberg (see Figure 1-1). Scientists say that 90 percent of what makes up an iceberg is invisible or below the waterline, and only 10 percent is above it. Think about diversity. People can only see about 10 percent of visible traits that make you diverse. The rest is invisible (beneath the surface). Sometimes you can see the diversity, and sometimes you can't.

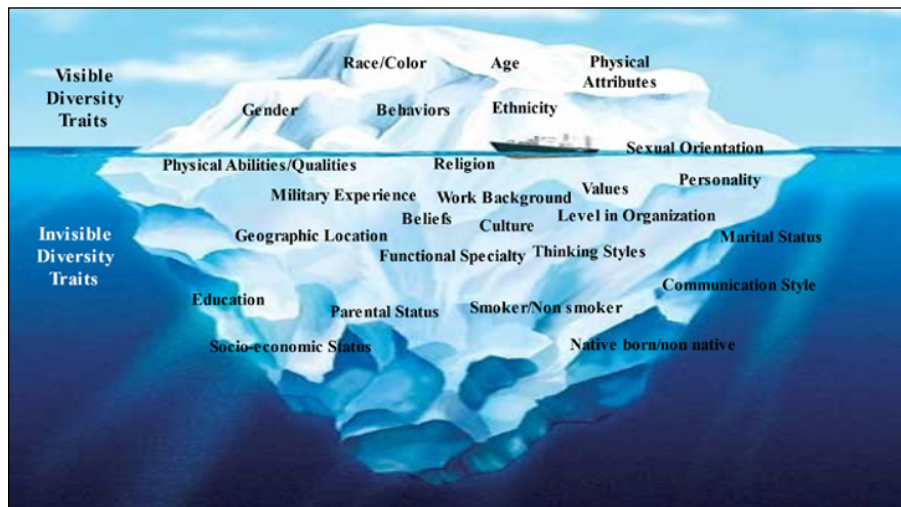


FIGURE 1-1:
The diversity
iceberg.

Courtesy of Dr. Shirley Davis.



REMEMBER

You can have diversity and not have inclusion. Diversity just is. Diversity is the human aspect, and everyone is diverse. But inclusion is the environment and the atmosphere people experience and work in. And that's where the work continues. Recruiting and hiring top diverse talent isn't enough; you must create an inclusive

work environment where those people feel valued, respected, and treated fairly and have equal opportunity to succeed. To discover more about what diverse talent needs, check out Chapter 2.

Think about DEI as a continuum with inclusion as the final phase toward sustainability and business outcomes. In the workplace, diversity without inclusion fails to attract and retain diverse talent and doesn't encourage diverse employees to bring their full selves to work, thereby failing to motivate their participation and do their best work.

In short, diversity is easier to measure because humans in all varieties merely exist; however, inclusion is a practice. Diversity can and has been legislated in various policies throughout various locations and organizations. Inclusion often results from a commitment to practicing this type of behavior.



REMEMBER

Diversity also has different meanings within various cultural contexts. For example, the U.S. perspective of diversity suggests all the various ways you can see or describe people. But in some European countries, diversity leans more toward gender differences. In Middle Eastern countries, diversity often speaks to religious beliefs.

Equity and Equality

Although the terms *equity* and *equality* may sound similar, implementing one versus the other can lead to dramatically different outcomes for marginalized or underrepresented people. Here's how I define them. *Equality* is defined as each person or group of people being given the same resources or opportunities. On the other hand, *equity* recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates each the exact resources and opportunities they need to reach an equal outcome. You can find out more on how to apply an equity lens in Chapter 18.



REMEMBER

Equity is the process, and equality is the outcome. In other words, equity is essential to achieving true equality. And a diverse organization isn't automatically an inclusive one, and an inclusive organization isn't automatically an equitable one.

Recognizing DEI as separate and complex, though related, concepts is an important step for leaders to achieve a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace culture. Leaders need to understand that diversifying a workforce doesn't automatically result in new hires feeling welcome, which suggests that inclusion should be a goal that organizations assign resources to. And their focus on equity needs to be based on the knowledge that not all employees or potential employees have access to the same resources and that they should structure strategies and resources accordingly.

Implicit bias

Bias is a tendency or inclination that results in judgment without question. Often, biases are unreasoned and based on inaccurate and incomplete information. Everyone has bias. It's part of the human makeup; you need bias to protect you from danger. Biologically, people are hard-wired to prefer people who look like them, sound like them, and share their interests. But when left unchecked, biases can have a negative impact in every interaction.

Implicit bias (also referred to as *unconscious bias*) is an unconscious opinion, positive or negative, that you have about a group or person. Implicit biases are the attitudes or stereotypes that are taught and developed early in life, and they strengthen over time, affecting your understanding, actions, and decisions without your knowing it.

With the vast amount of diversity that makes up the global workforce — including more women, people of color, LGBTQ people, veterans, introverts and extroverts, immigrants, people with different abilities/thinking styles/personalities, and people from five generations to name a few — the level of complexity and potential conflicts that can arise from unconscious bias is sure to increase. Leaders make decisions in the workplace every day, from sourcing to promotions to creating business strategy and beyond. Whether they recognize it or not, implicit bias enters into every one of these decisions. To find out more about implicit bias, as well as other types of biases and how you can deal with them, head to Chapter 6.

Inclusion

I describe *inclusion* as the degree to which an employee perceives that they're a valued member of the work group and encouraged to fully participate in the organization. At the base level, diversity efforts are concerned with representation of various groups; however, don't confuse that with creating an inclusive environment. To find out how inclusive you are, take the assessment provided in Chapter 4.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to complex ways in which people hold many marginal group affiliations at the same time. These identities can combine, overlap, or intersect in a person or group, resulting in multiple, interdependent systems of discrimination or oppression (for example, descriptors of my identity include a woman of color, a mom, a movie buff, a corporate executive, a world traveler, a speaker, and a Human Resources professional). Thus, the intersectional experience of one person or group is greater than the sum of the individual forms of discrimination or disadvantage.