



WORKPLACE IMPACT OF CULTURAL INCLUSION IN DECISION MAKING

A QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE
BLENDED STUDY BY

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in Decision Making
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By
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Chapter 1: Research Frameworks

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this dissertation was to provide an argument for the importance of cultural diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the 21st century workforce. The process includes mechanisms that provided an insight on the operational effects observed in a company's productivity, growth, and economic impact if they lacked D&I . Lastly, I sought to provide suggestions on best practices to alleviate the hurdles in implementing initiatives to increase cultural diversity and inclusion in the workplace. In my research, I understood that I needed to answer pertinent questions that once explained, will allow me to better understand the dynamics involved in this argument. To that end, my questions below were instrumental in leading me to a path of enlightenment. In my work, I was led and sometimes provoked by the following questions.

Research Question 1: What are the best practices of Inclusion identified by small businesses as effective in the decision making process and profitability?

Research Question 2: How can organizations apply effective inclusion initiatives without harming their bottom line?

In addition, this study includes the rule of law regarding diversity and inclusion in the US, its applicability and its impact to the economy while seeking to assess the effects and consequences of an abortive implementation of the law. This study brings to light best practices in the inclusion initiatives with the lowest budgets that is beneficial to small businesses.

My research can be a tool for small businesses that are thriving in their industry but have reached the maturity level and currently in need innovation to stabilize. When discussing innovation, we are talking about different perspectives, different views, and different outlooks. For a company to be innovative, it cannot only touch on its product or services but also its human resources.

As we all know, innovation is costly and could take between 5 to 10 years for a small business to implement its innovation strategies, this is where my research would be a useful tool.

Companies could use it to:

- 1- Grow economically, nationally & locally.
- 2- Retain their human resources as well as attract best people for the job.
- 3- Penetrate different and new markets.
- 4- Organic way to innovate.

Research Analytics

The project is a qualitative research that includes discovery and evaluation of results. However, as its investigative in nature, new discoveries have compelled me to utilize additional research tools which ultimately changed the depth of my analysis. I also chose to use the survey method to collect data. Lastly, I engaged in the quantitative research method to organize the data. Regrettably, due to the new COVID-19 pandemic that has changed our ways of conducting research. How we communicate, work, and handle personnel in the workplace had been changed. As a result, I was challenged to find alternate methods to collect empirical data. Thus, I decided to conduct the research as a Qualitative and Quantitative Blended study.

COVID-19 has brought different views and methods to our daily work life and my research includes in its components the impact of COVID-19 on diversity and inclusion

practices for the companies represented in the sample. The data was collected through surveys, workforce development research, market studies, articles, and publications. The survey pool was about 50 small businesses in Florida, the pool included varying cultures, ages, genders, and industry.

My conceptual variable for this research is to highlight the opportunities missed by not properly applying the federal statute of inclusion. In addition, the price small businesses will continue to pay if they do not engage in the practice of diversity with inclusion in strategic decision making.

The research commenced by the collection of quantitative data from the 50 companies in Florida. I engaged in fiscal soundness assessment, demographic analysis of the employment pool and analyzing corporate organizational charts to identify leadership, I measured the level of compliance with said federal statutes. Using surveys, data mining, and analyzation of the Conceptual and Operation properties of the observed variables, the information shed the light on trends, preferences, actions, and opinions.

Definitions of Terms

Diversity: The essence of diversity is the acceptance and respect. The idea suggests an understanding that everyone is unique and should be recognized for his or her individual differences. Diversity in the sociological, psychological, and management fields is regularly considered in terms of the elements of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, culture, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. Diversity is the discovery of the differences in a safe, encouraging, and cultivating environment. It is the understanding of one another and

shifting simple tolerance to embracing and celebrate the richness contained within everyone.

Diversity Initiatives: an organizations' strategic response to diversity. The initiative looks at the internal and external needs of the organization in diversity and responds with a strategically aligned approach.

Inclusion: SHRM defines inclusion separately from diversity as the achievement of a work environment in which all individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute fully to the organization's success.

Leadership: the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a common goal. In a business setting, this can mean directing workers and colleagues with a strategy to meet the company's needs.

Organizational Culture: refers to culture in any type of organization including that of schools, universities, not-for-profit groups, government agencies, or business entities. In business, terms such as corporate culture and company culture are often used to refer to a similar concept.

Workplace Diversity: when a company hires a wide range of diverse individuals. Diversity is often misconceived as solely multicultural matters, however it also applies to diversity of gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexuality, language, educational, background, and so on.

Impact Analysis

Our world is changing rapidly, between globalization, cross-national mergers and acquisitions, diverse cultures, beliefs, and backgrounds, we find ourselves having to

connect with people and work with different cultures daily. Workplace diversity has become more important than before as organizations are working hard to offer high quality services to stay globally competitive. It's important that they should not forget diversity and inclusion are as important as a quality product. Companies like Google, Microsoft and Facebook have been investing in their Human Resources since the beginning, they have noticed how inclusion has a very important impact on the company's productivity as well as its reputation. *Google Diversity Annual Report (2020)* / *Facebook Diversity - Advancing Opportunities for All Report (2020)*

As a small business trying to penetrate the global market, they tend to concentrate on customers, quality products, and services. Often, they lack awareness of the important benefits of inclusion and view it just as a costly initiative. Unfortunately, it does take a tremendous effort to find the right methods and inclusion practices.

Previous studies have shown the importance of diversity and inclusion in the workplace and how beneficial it is to the bottom line of the company. *7 Studies That Prove the Value of Diversity in the Workplace (2017)*

We also know that applying inclusion initiatives could be expensive, my research includes a sample of inclusion initiatives that could be adopted by different organizations to help grow their cultural diversity and inclusion as well as maintain their productivity. This study focuses on the impact of inclusion initiatives within different industries and identifies best practices for small businesses to implement.

Current Studies

Different studies have shown that diverse workplaces are highly impactful, driving productivity and profitability throughout the company. It is evident when leaders

prioritize diverse and inclusive personnel, it elevates the effectiveness of their business, the satisfaction and overall, the success. In addition, implementing a D&I strategy can enhance positively the brand image within consumers.

However, diversity and inclusion often mean a focus on hiring, and even significant investments of time and money, it takes years to implement changes for companies with thousands of employees. Nevertheless, companies can capitalize on the diversity they already have by including more diverse employees in business decisions at all levels. This style of inclusion behavior can help leaders make inclusion initiative decision today. The simple model of inclusive decision making can create faster change and add to the bottom line.

Research recently conducted by Forbes on inclusive decision making analyzed approximately 600 business decisions made by 200 different business teams in a wide variety of companies over two years. *The Financial Benefits of Diversity: (2017)*

The research showed a direct line between decision making and better business performance, inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time, teams that follow an inclusive process make decisions twice faster with half the time. and decisions made and executed by diverse teams delivered 60% better results. This research showed that diversity and inclusion should go hand in hand to drive company results.

It is essential for leaders to take the challenge of supporting and ensuring employees are participating in D&I initiatives aligned with the company's strategic plan and core values. Leaders must also insure they are capitalizing on unique qualities, knowledge, skills, and expertise of their employees as a method to enhance productivity within teams and their companies.

Significance of the Study

Cultural Diversity and Inclusion are pivotal to the growth of a small business enterprise. With the globalization of the target market, companies are bound to have different people and cultures in the workplace. We no longer work in a traditional environment where staff speak the same language and follow the same traditions and rules. Because the workplace population has changed significantly, this study shows how to seize the opportunity of having different cultures by including them in strategic decision making. Through a compilation of writings, surveys, and readings, I collected data trends and carved out an evidence-based path to encourage small businesses to begin their advantageous journey of Cultural Diversity and Inclusion.

Most of the research that has been conducted previously addressed areas that include specific demographics such as ethnicity, age, gender, religion and level of education and its impact on the larger companies. Few studies have focused on its impact on small businesses and how they can benefit from it. This study fills a void in the applicability of diversity and inclusion initiatives as strategies for improving the culture of small businesses. Ultimately, it will support small businesses to cultivate the utilization of inclusion initiatives as they develop strategies to employ in creating low budget high-performing work teams that positively effect productivity and performance.

In the last few years, workforce diversity has become an added value among large organizations who are focused on innovation. Having a diverse workforce is being recognized as crucial in improving a companies' performance and growth. As we begin the journey of discovery, it is important to understand how we came to this point in our civilization. We will begin by looking back about half a century when the first law was put in place.

It is important to note that the first modern time pioneer, President John F. Kennedy was instrumental in the Civil Rights Act. Unfortunately, he was assassinated in November of

1963 before the law was put into action. However, President Lyndon B. Johnson picked up the baton and signed the Civil Rights Act in 1964. The act was designed to outlaw discrimination and segregation in all public establishments and federally funded programs. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibits employment discrimination against someone based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex (US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission).

Almost 56 years after the law has been in place, we find ourselves still researching on how to implement it better. In recent years, we have noticed that while research in diversity has been rich, that of inclusion has been all but absent in the workplace. Recent findings indicate that while employers are hiring to meet federal regulations, they are not including those employees in the decision-making process.

Having a federal law on the books cannot induce the propensity to apply it as it was intended. My goal is to bring to light the successful companies that use their inclusion model effectively and compare it to companies that are not managing their human resources to their fullest potential.

Thanks to breakthroughs in technology, a global research community has been able to rise. The international conversation on innovation has led major corporations to research new techniques that will help them offer high-quality services to customers. In most preliminary studies, it has become evident that to remain globally competitive, they must ensure that a diverse and inclusive work culture exists within their firms. However, these large companies have the means and resources to attract different groups of people as well as implement diverse recruitment strategies. The initiative for a large organization to attract a diverse workforce and continue to maintain cohesiveness in communication and decision making, is an arduous task at best. However, it has been well established, that diversity and inclusion in corporate decision-making is worth every penny spent.

As a pivotal dilemma, small businesses do not have the capital or resources to entertain such innovative approaches as their goal is to stay solvent in an ever-changing economy. Changing the culture of a company to become more diverse and inclusive is neither easy nor inexpensive for small businesses.

To that end, my research dives into best practices of a dichotomy of companies throughout the United States within the same small business designation but significantly different in size. The qualitative study analyzed the use of inclusion initiatives used by some companies to help them achieve their desired outcomes. This study includes an understanding of the impact diversity and inclusion has in the growth and maturity of a company.

It also shows how they were able to establish a diverse and inclusive business culture using a simple, inexpensive framework. This work outlines a clear path to affect economic development, retain human resources, while using the least of their resources.

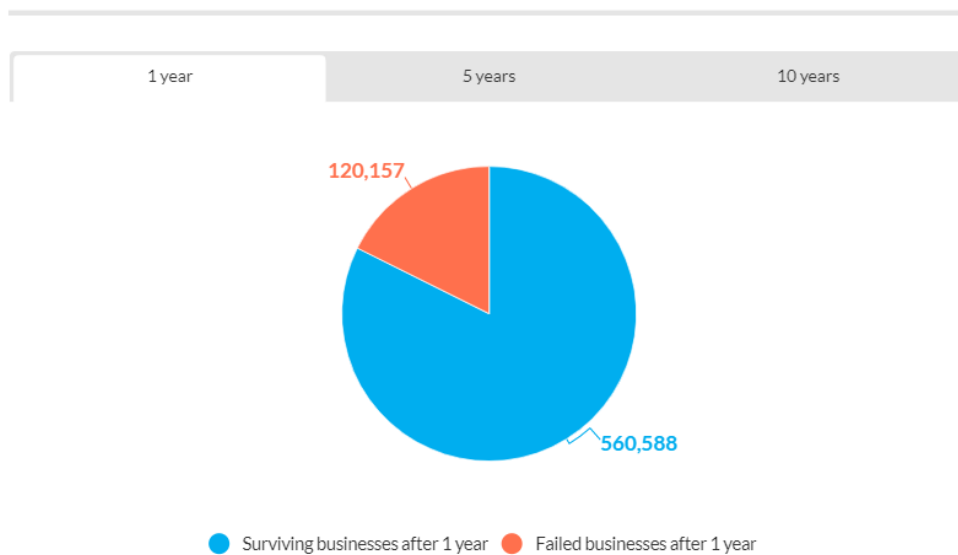
Theoretical Framework

Related studies about diverse and inclusive work cultures disclosed that productive companies that are employing diverse staff members benefit by increasing their standing in the community as well as internationally. They become attractive places to work, thus expanding their capabilities to hire and preserve a diverse workforce and generally have a positive reputation for offering a diverse and inclusive working environment. With similar reputation, it enhances the company's ability to be competitive globally and in emerging markets.

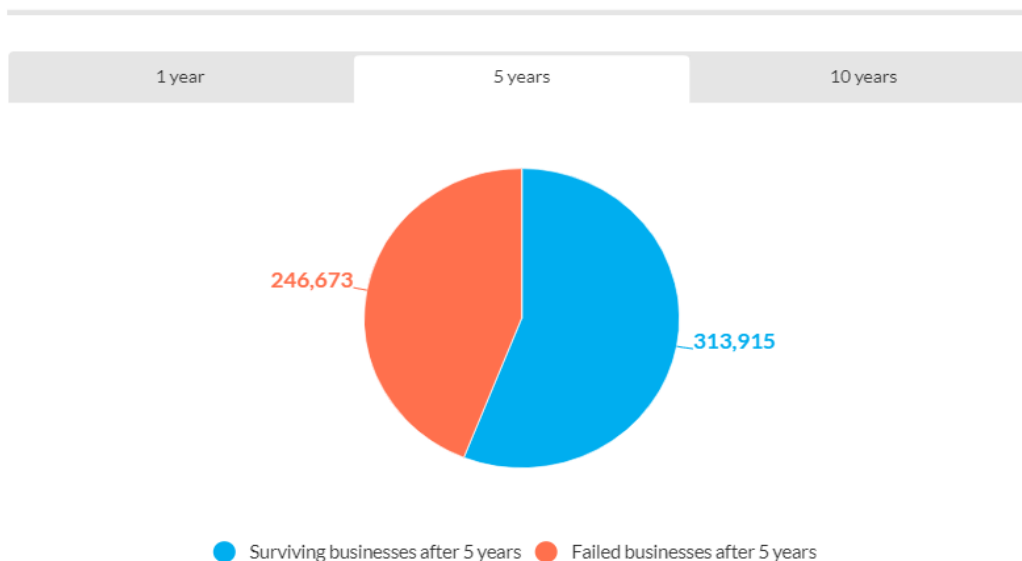
Inclusive organizations have atmospheres of fairness, respect equality, dignity, and autonomy. These principles are promoted daily and part of the company's everyday goals and behavior. When referencing such research, we are defining medium to large companies and generally neglecting small enterprises which in 2019 SMBs represented

99.9 % of the US businesses, play an extremely significant role in the US economy, and are vital to economic development and job creation. According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, about 20% of U.S. small businesses fail within the first year. Roughly about 50% have faded by the end of their fifth year. After 10 years, only around a third of businesses have survived. Surprisingly, business failure rates are consistent. Even during the economic downturn starting around 2008.

U.S. Small Businesses Failure Rate 2010-2019

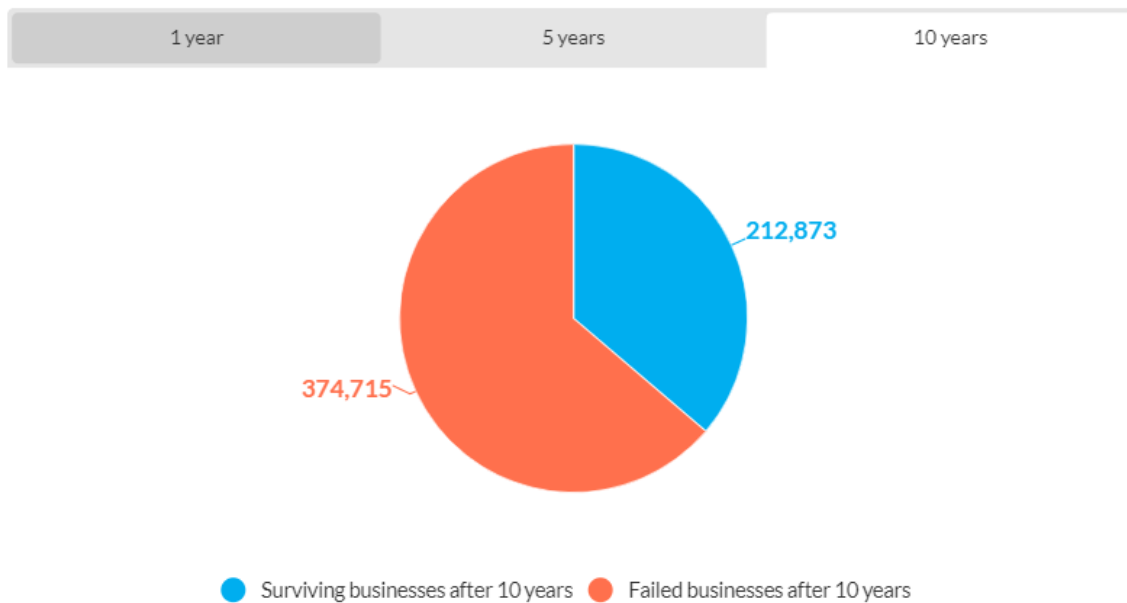


U.S. Small Businesses Failure Rate 2010-2019



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

U.S. Small Businesses Failure Rate 2010-2019



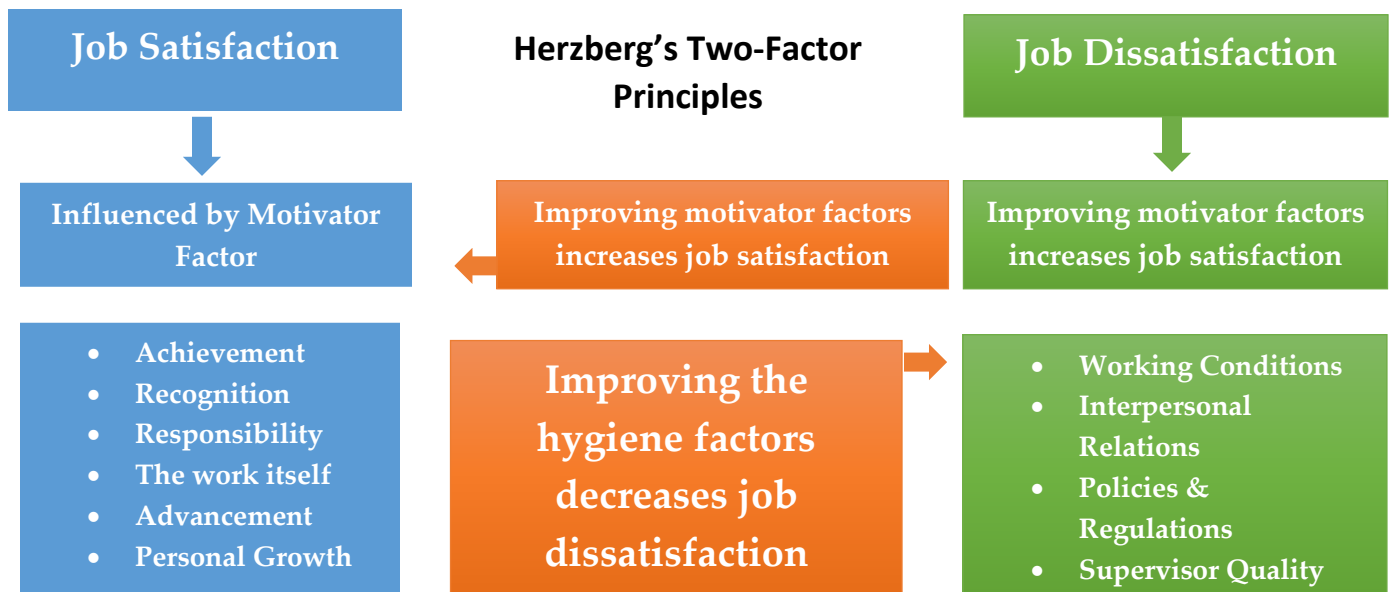
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

This study contains two theories which include the Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Zaballero & Kim, 2014); and the Agency Theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). The theories are studied in this dissertation and applied to small businesses; research has shown that the most common reason small businesses fail include poor management.

Fredrick Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

In the late 1950s psychologist Fredrick Herzberg wanted to know what factors created job satisfaction, and how it impacted people's motivation. The Fredrick Herzberg Two-Factor Theory pinpoints two factors that work autonomously of each other, job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. His two-factor theory, which hypothesized that are two different sets of factors governing job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction: "hygiene factors," or extrinsic motivators and "motivation factors," or intrinsic motivators. Motivators grow from positive intrinsic circumstances within the job such as challenging work, accomplishments, acknowledgment, and personal growth. These are factors that

often contribute to increase staff productivity (Herzberg, 1968). Hygiene, on the other hand, touches extrinsic factors that result from organizational policies, supervisory practices, and salaries. Hygiene factors do not add to positive employee satisfaction. Nonetheless, their absence will cause a dissatisfaction when employee job status, job security, salary, working conditions, and fringe benefits are at risk, hence affecting the work culture in organizations. As organizations strive to become more productive with high-performing work teams, motivators and hygiene factors are necessary (Herzberg, 1968).



Agency Theory

Agency theory is used to differentiate between the interest of workers and management. In high-performing companies, management must support, model, and offer opportunities for staff and themselves to partake in diversity initiatives. It is the responsibility of staff members to participate in efforts that are aligned with the company's strategic plan and goals. Agency theory is used to tackle conflict of interest between the management (the principal) and the staff (agent) when there are differences

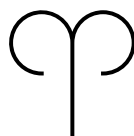
regarding policies, attitudes, and risk taking. For companies to stay competitive, work teams must remain innovative and take risks as they employ the diverse talents and skills of the workforce (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The foundation of this study is related to how small businesses in the 21st century can affect their Diversity and Inclusion through continuous improvement without harming the bottom line. Continuous improvement within companies is grounded upon numerous factors which include:

- 1) The company's ability to recognize the need for new D&I initiatives.
- 2) The company's ability to identify and implement the needed initiatives.
- 3) The company's ability to sustain the initiatives through acceptance and assurance of the new processes and strategies.
- 4) Promoting diversity and creating inclusion within leadership, management, and staff.

All these factors are supported in the two theories suggested by the Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Zaballero & Kim, 2014); and the Agency Theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). These two theories relate to collaborative inclusive work cultures and managing conflict within organizations.

The two research questions established for this study were based on the notions of these theories and related literature. The findings of this study are beneficial as companies continue to pursue ways in which they can enhance their performance and productivity while seizing the squandered opportunities of diverse and inclusive work environment.



Chapter 2: Literature Review and Reflection

Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to review theoretical and empirical literature related to effective organizational work cultures. It includes historical background, and literature related to diverse and inclusive work cultures. It also provides a review of literature on diversity & inclusion initiatives and measures for assessing the inclusion initiatives.

Historical Background

What is “Diversity”?

“It’s hard to define what diversity is because everyone has an opinion.”

– Goldman Sachs

It is challenging to establish the start of diversity initiatives in the workforce, in 1948, President Truman signed Executive Order 9981 to desegregate the armed services which some scholars cite as the first diversity initiative in the workplace. The Executive Order 9981 required equality of treatment and opportunity in the armed services, however it did not expressly prohibit segregation. As a result of this order, by 1953, 95% of African American Army soldiers were serving in integrated units. (McCormick, 2008)

Equal Employment Opportunity

Equal Employment Opportunity represents a body of law that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, and disability. Enforced by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), there are seven federal laws that are at the core of EEO law.

- **Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** was enacted by Congress to prohibit employment discrimination based on race, sex, color, religion, and national origin.

Title VII applies to private employers, labor unions, and employment agencies. The Act prohibits discrimination in recruitment, hiring, wages, assignment, promotions, benefits, discipline, discharge, layoffs, and almost every aspect of employment. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act became a very powerful legislative tool that enabled much of the diversity present in today's workforce.

- **The Equal Pay Act of 1963** prohibits discrimination in the payment of wages based on gender. The legislation recognized the disparity in pay between men and women doing the same or similar jobs.
- **The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967** prohibits discrimination against persons who are 40 years of age or older. Prior to 1967, Congress found clear evidence of older workers being discriminated against in trying to obtain employment or being disproportionately affected by layoffs and downsizing.
- **The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**, Titles I and V, as amended by the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies, and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.
- **The Rehabilitation Act of 1973**, in Sections 501 and 505, prohibits the Federal Government as an employer from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities.

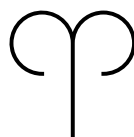
- **The Civil Rights Act of 1991** was enacted to “strengthen and improve Federal civil rights laws, to provide for damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination, to clarify provisions regarding disparate impact actions and other purposes.
- **The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA)**, Title II, prohibits employment discrimination based on genetic information about an applicant, employee, or former employee.

EEOC enforces all these laws and provides supervision and direction of all federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies.

Affirmative Action

Affirmative Action was established by President Lyndon B. Johnson’s Executive Order 11246 in 1965 to resolve historic and ongoing discrimination. The goal was to create equality as a fact and a result not only as a right and a theory. Executive Order 11246 mandated employers to evaluate their company’s personnel structure and formulate written plans to remove underrepresentation of women and minorities if it occurred in the work environment.

Affirmative Action is a commitment to ensure equality. It provides legal remedies to address the historic discrimination that disadvantaged groups and individuals have faced. Affirmative Action compliance are also critical tools for building diversity and inclusion policies.



Differences between EEO, Affirmative Action and D&I Initiatives

EEO / Affirmative Action	Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
Concentrate on compliance with legal mandates	Focus on organizationally driven goals and strategies
Deficit-based approach to change	Asset-based approach to change
Focus on quantitative change	Focus on quantitative and qualitative transformation
Responsibility and accountability not vested in all leaders	Organization wide responsibility and accountability
Seek to enhance employee demographics	Pursue to develop competitive advantage

D&I would be considered as an expensive and time-consuming tool when discussing small businesses. Nowadays, small companies are more concentrated on respecting the law and being compliant instead of using the law to their benefit and creating competitive advantage.

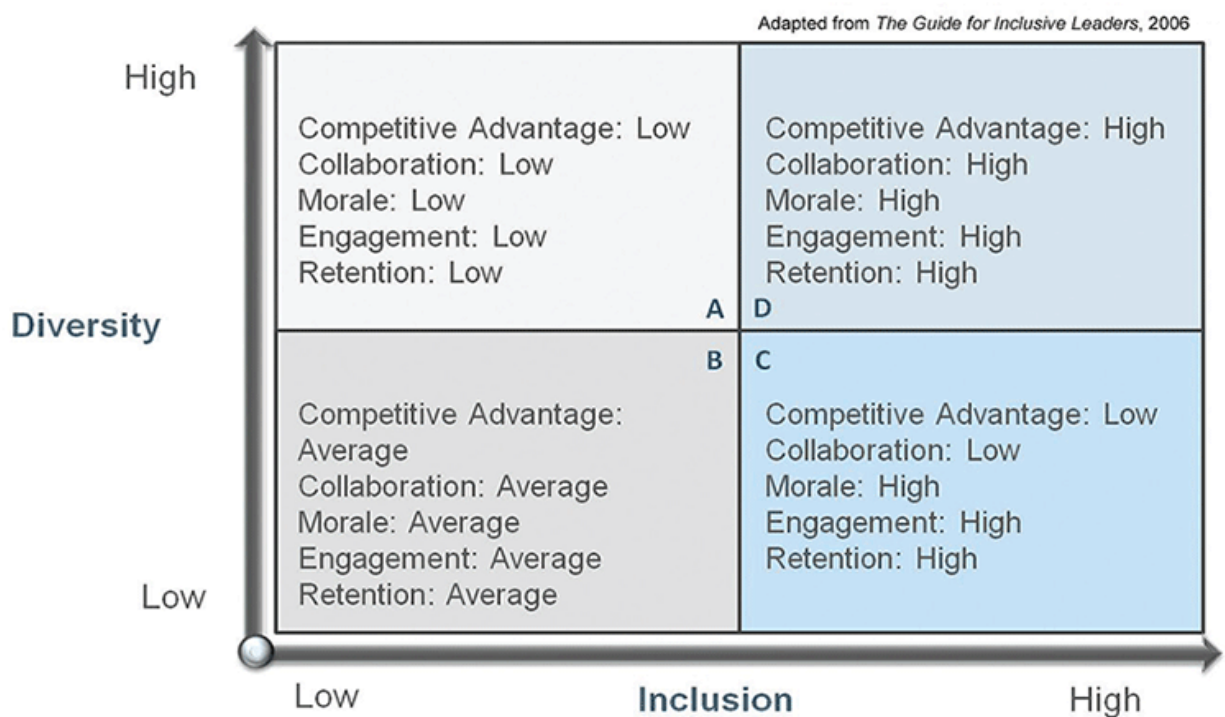
Understanding Diversity & Inclusion

Nowadays, diversity has a considerably bigger significance than conventional explanations that emphasis on gender and ethnicity. In the global perspective, we can describe diversity as noticeable and imperceptible differences, thinking and leadership styles, religious background, sexual orientation, age, experience, and culture.

Inclusiveness is the value of the organizational culture that amplifies and influences diverse faculties, backgrounds, and angles of all personnel. Essentially, diversity brings different people together and inclusion empowers those people to thrive within an organization.

Organizations aim to attract a diverse group of people; however, the struggle comes with retaining the appropriate talent. Not paying attention to an inclusive environment might be more dysfunctional than those without diverse staff. Inclusive environment pays off eventually and has greater benefits, nevertheless corporations must pay attention to how and if leaders are creating an inclusive culture. The chart below was adapted from “The Guide for Inclusive Leaders (2006)” shows the relationship between Diversity and Inclusion.

The upper-left **Quadrant A** demonstrates high diversity but low inclusion. The lower-left **Quadrant B** exemplifies low diversity and low inclusion. The bottom-right **Quadrant C** reveals high inclusion but low diversity, and **Quadrant D** identifies high inclusion and high diversity. Organizations that perform inclusion and diversity can benefit from high levels of cooperation, commitment, and retention, thus providing a **competitive advantage**.

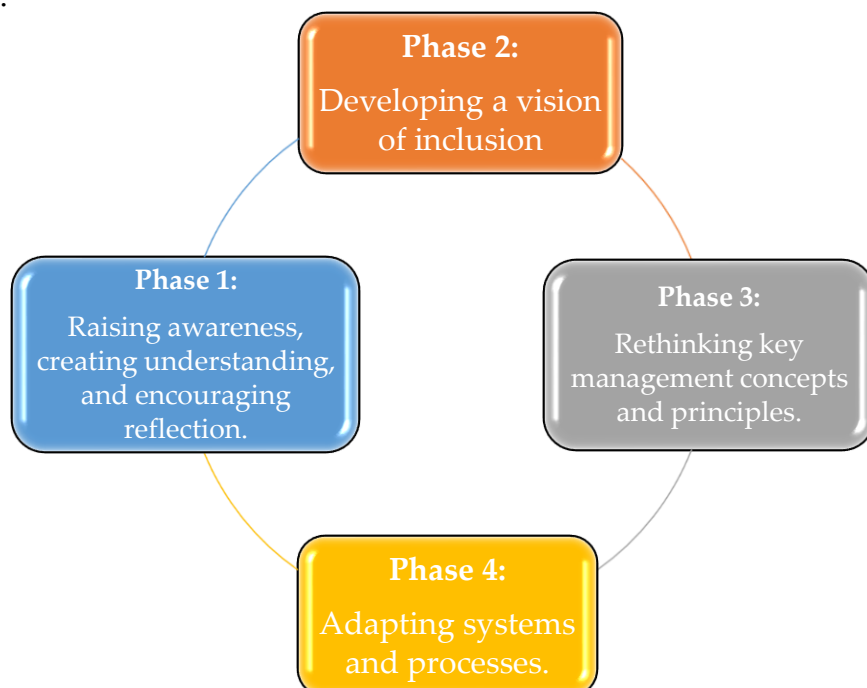


The role of a leader is essential in creating diversity, inclusiveness, and advancing from high performance. Conventional teams created with no distinct importance on diversity and inclusion

typically perform at an average level. International and culturally diverse teams experience intensified threats and opportunities, but high team performance occurs if the leader drives performance through inclusiveness as shown in the numbers below. *Delivering through Diversity* (2018)



Inclusion allows us to engage talent effectively and enhance innovation, creativity, productivity, reputation, and results. Nevertheless, Pless and Maak (2004) confirmed that forming inclusive work cultures is not a simple mission for companies. They rationalized that there are intrinsic obstacles companies encounter when handling the values of inclusion and propose four important transformational phases for developing a culture of inclusion. These phases include: Figure 2: Transformation stages for building a culture of inclusion.



Transformational Stages

Phase 1: Raising awareness, creating understanding, and encouraging reflection.

According to this phase, to allow change in an organization and building an inclusive culture, an alternative ways of viewing reality must be available to all participants. As part of this reality, Pless and Maak (2004) stated that companies should start what they call **ongoing discursive learning processes**.

These processes ought to be targeted at increasing knowledge amongst team members that different people perceive reality in a different way based on such aspects as their culture, gender, background experiences, values, and fundamental beliefs about things. Discursive learning processes allow people to improve their understanding on wherefore beliefs and actions of others may possibly be different from their own. It is imperative for learning processes to accentuate the importance of everyone's diverse moral claims.

Phase 2: Developing a vision of Inclusion.

A clearly defined vision is an essential starting point in forming an inclusive culture. It is important for companies to clarify the vision that is in alignment with the company's core values and mission. This vision supposed to be the catalyst for transformation which offers a mutual mental model and a clear image of the anticipated future objectives of the organization.

To create a multicultural and inclusive organization, the vision needs to integrate numerous key elements such as creating a work environment that is free from harassment and based upon respect for all individuals regardless of sex, gender, race, class, social or cultural origin, religion, disability, lifestyle, status in organization, etc. Companies need

to allow staff to feel valued by incorporating several perspectives to decision making and problem-solving; Organizations must provide equal opportunity for each employee to achieve their fullest potential and be considered for promotions and recognitions and lastly, showing compassion to capabilities and offering a balance between work and personal life.

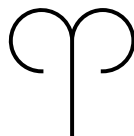
Phase 3: Rethinking key management concepts and principles.

Essentially this phase indicates that inclusive companies considerably broaden their understanding of a leader. Pless and Maak (2004) indicated that within inclusive companies, the leader serves as a mentor, coach, moderator, facilitator, and cultivator for the team. The leader offers opportunities and encourages staff in their growth by giving advice and acting as a mentor and coach. The leader also cultivates dialogue among diverse groups and encourages creativity among staff; thus, helping the company flourish and become more productive.

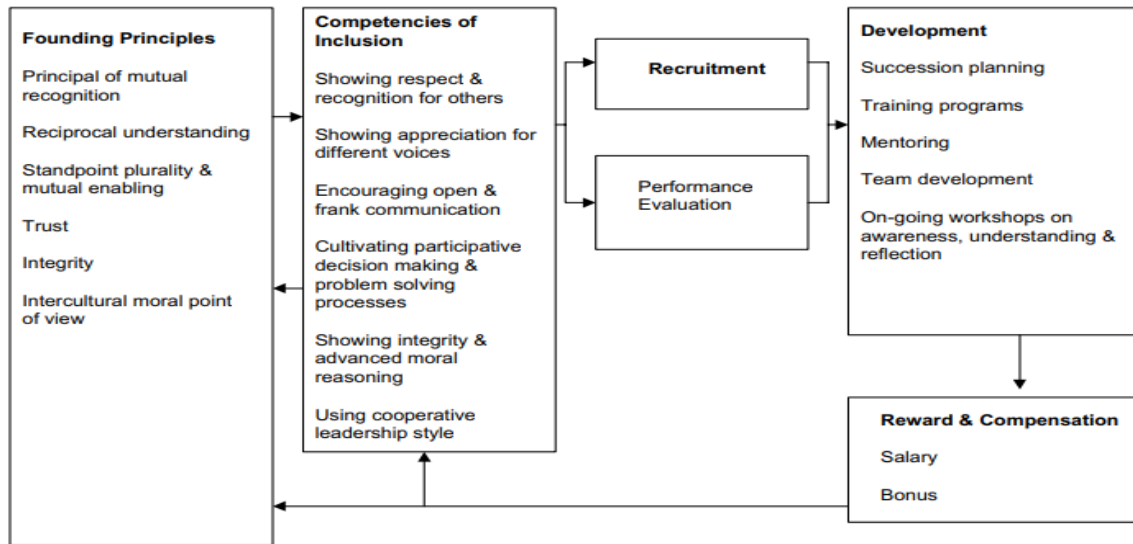
Phase 4: Adapting Systems and Processes.

Once awareness has been built, vision has been created and clarifies the general direction for change, now comes the role of acting and changing the behavior of the organizational culture. To reflect the change on the company, the stakeholders must have certain qualities and traits called competencies of inclusion which help them effectively into handling challenges and situations that may ascend as they work in the diverse environment to attain the objectives and aims of the company (See figure 3).

Figure 3. An integrated Human Relations Management system to foster a culture of inclusion.



Nicola M. Pless and Thomas Maak



Leadership and Inclusion

The process of inclusion involves each individual and makes people feel appreciated as being crucial to the success of the company. Evidence shows that when people feel appreciated, they perform at full capacity and feel part of the organization's mission. This culture change generates higher performing businesses where motivation and optimism thrive.

Companies that create and nurture a diverse and inclusive environment benefit from remarkable advancements in talent retention, quality, creativity, productivity, job satisfaction and customer service. As we know, prior Diversity and Inclusion were not an important tool in the company, thus when organizations recognized the benefit of D&I, they had to strategize and apply change mechanisms and plans to establish a healthy work culture. This process took time and money from organizations with large number of staff as they had to get total support from executive leadership and apply the change understanding the behaviors and experiences that would prevent the companies from reaching their set goals.

“Diversity is the mix, and inclusion getting the mix to work well together.”

Global Diversity Practice

Leadership and inclusion go hand in hand, it is vital for companies to comprehend that Senior leaders must participate in the training that other organization members attend, but, even more importantly, they must exhibit their “learning” from the sessions, readings, interactions, tapes, books, or research. *Susan M. Heathfield (2020)*

Hence, forming diverse and inclusive work cultures require all employees to have a motivation to change behaviors and attitudes, recognize and support the organization’s vision, and essentially, have a clear grasp of what diversity and inclusion represent in the work environment.

Change is both beneficial & crucial, but hard to accept by everyone especially company leaders and not easy to apply. According to a research completed by Juliet Bourke and Andrea Titus (2020) , there are 6 traits or behaviors distinguishes inclusive leaders from others:

Commitment: Leaders express direct commitment to diversity and make diversity and inclusion a personal priority.

Humility: Humble leaders that admit mistakes and create an environment for others to collaborate.

Consciousness of bias: They acknowledge personal blind spots as well as flaws in the system and work hard to ensure meritocracy.

Curiosity: They establish an open mindset, curiosity, openness to listen and understand others without judgement.

Cultural Intelligence: They are conscientious to others’ cultures and adjust, as necessary.

Effective Collaboration: They encourage others, attentive to diversity of thinking and psychological wellbeing, as well as concentrate on team unity.

These traits are considered as a common sense when looking at it from an outsider's perspective. When reviewing and researching different companies, sometimes the commonsense hides behind the numeric goals and the bottom line. **The question lies on how can we establish such traits in small companies without harming the bottom line?**

Decision Making and Inclusion

Diversity + Inclusion = Better Decision Making at Work

A study by Nishii (2013) shows that some companies identify diversity and inclusion initiatives as being required by pressures to abide by legal regulations or they plainly keep up with practices implemented by fellow companies. Many companies focus on the benefits of hiring different identity groups, but they lack the understanding of the importance of an inclusive policy and climate in the organization. The question lies on how companies can understand the benefits of inclusion in decision making and benefit from its competitive advantage.

“The art of conversation is the art of hearing as well as of being heard.” – William Hazlitt

A company's capacity to profit from the possible gains combined with workforce inclusion is dependent on the effectiveness with which inclusive perceptions are obtained and incorporated into decision making, not just from conventional employees but from all employees. The following are principles that can be implemented to create a more inclusive decision-making environment:



Content: Sam Kaner, Facilitator's guide to participatory decision-making. Jossey-Bass, 2014.

Principle 1: Ensure Full Participation: Encourage all members to speak, do not allow dominance, create methodologies for introverts and that will allow diversity of opinion thus better decision making.

Principle 2: Create Mutual Understanding: Ensure that all participants understand the goals behind the decision making and allow full transparency within the group, it is necessary that all employees understand and think about another's point of view, does not mean they have to agree with their point of view, but fully respect and understand it will allow diversity of opinion.

Principle 3: Develop Inclusive Solutions: Apprehend all ideas for problem-solving solutions, all team members should have participated in developing the potential solutions.

Principle 4: All members must sense a shared responsibility in finalizing the action plan and help implementing the decisions.

Nishii and Rich (2013) proposed that leaders can produce an environment in where employees are enthusiastic to offer their opinions and ideas about critical work procedures by:

- 1) Offering numerous ways for upward communication.
- 2) Obtain informal feedback from employees.
- 3) Welcome alternative ideas regarding the company's work.
- 4) Use the information received into decision making when suitable.

Organizations should practice what William Foote Whyte described as the “proximity principle,” that refers to those closest to the work are in best situation to layout ideal work process. Using this method, it is more viable to analyze the inclusion initiatives and its efficiency within the organization. Conducting such methods will lead organizations into competitive advantage.

Failure of Inclusion Initiatives within organizations

There are numerous reasons why most companies' diversity and inclusion initiatives are failing to deliver substantial transformation and recognize the true competitive advantage of a diverse and inclusive workforce. The importance to true competitive advantage can be located with inclusion and this is the area where most diversity and inclusion(D&I) initiatives are lacking.

Here are some reasons why D&I efforts are not generating the anticipated result:

- When discussing D&I initiatives, leaders always concentrate on the diversity in numbers and not inclusion. Leaders' emphasis is often on the number or percentage of diverse individuals, they tend to forget the most effective way to use

D&I is that it goes hand in hand, the Human Resources hires the diverse talent, and the leadership retains it by being inclusive.

- Most companies see Diversity and Inclusion as a Human Resources not a business importance. Which means if companies are expecting results from D&I initiatives, the HR department is held accountable, the focus and funding of D&I can also shift depending on departmental importance. D&I initiatives need to be a business essential that is supported over time and not an item that can shift depending on priorities.
- Research has also shown that one of the failures is the lack of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) Many companies observe and report on the activity of D&I initiatives instead of the stated goals.

To realize the competitive advantage of D&I, the company culture needs to support inclusion at all levels and all forms. It is not easy, nor is it fast, but necessitates continuous attention and change over time. It requires organizations to genuinely live by their mission and values they support.

Best Practices for Inclusion

Research Question 1 – *What are the best practices of Inclusion identified by small businesses as effective in the decision making process and profitability?*

Diversity is about hiring a workforce that includes people with different worldviews, ethnicities, religions, backgrounds, abilities, and ages. However, diversity is only balanced out when diverse individuals feel included. This is a crucial challenge that companies face when trying to create a well-versed organizational culture. Diversity and inclusion are not a cookie cutter method, every company has its own unique situations

that cannot be fully anticipated when including different behaviors and circumstances. Every company must fully be motivated, well versed, and ready to employ D&I initiatives, and that includes buy-in from leadership.

Most organizations fail when it comes to their diversity and inclusion efforts. The reason: there are important flaws in how most organizations consider diversity & inclusion, including how they are approaching unconscious bias. The major problem is that the stress is on diversity, instead of inclusion. The genuine competitive advantage of D&I cannot be accomplished without a substantial attention on inclusion. A company can only benefit from its diverse staff if they can empower those diverse viewpoints and experiences in their decision-making.

According to a research done by Forbes the following initiatives are few ways companies can cultivate workplace culture that inspire diversity and inclusion. *The Financial Benefits of Diversity: (2017)*

Change Through Education

Education comes in many ways such as training, workshops, team building, etc. The goal here is to educate all employees including leadership and make them aware of their own unconscious bias. This step is very important into realizing that change cannot happen unless the person is aware of their own beliefs and biases and are eager to apply change for the betterment of the company.

Encourage Supportive and Safe Space

All employees should feel heard and comfortable to freely voice their feelings, opinions, and concerns, this will allow the hard questions and the sensitive subjects to be brought up to management. This will also allow employees to feel more comfortable sharing their opinions and views when it comes to decision making. When employees

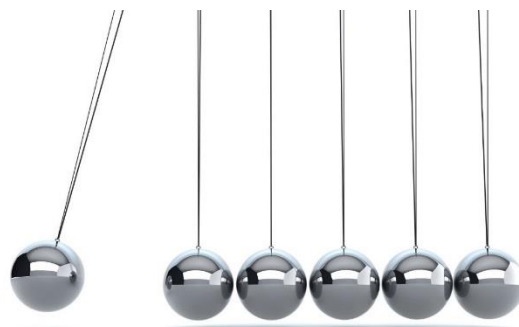
feel valued and their concerns are heard, they tend to care more about their performance and share their own perspectives and ideas when it comes to decision making.

Collective Accountability

Leadership and management are the ones who set the attitude of the organizational culture and employees most of the time look at them to see if they are following what they advise. Everyone in the company must follow and abide by the same rules to keep a transparent and healthy workplace. Consequences should be put in place for everyone that make mistakes regardless of their rank or title.

To include a less expensive ways of D&I, companies can also concentrate not only on the recruitment and hiring but within their own employees. Instead of having to regroup and redesign the recruitment plan, companies can capitalize on the diversity from within and make it more inclusive. Which means companies can now review their current assets and include them in the decision making at all levels.

Directly measuring this inclusive behavior concentrates on leadership actions that leaders can take today. The easy notion of inclusive decision making can create faster change and contribute directly to the bottom line.



Chapter 3: Inclusion Initiatives Trends

Overview

Nurturing a robust culture has frequently been a prospective route to allying employees with a company's strategic priorities. This chapter shows us different types of successfully measuring inclusion initiatives, organizational effectiveness, innovation in inclusion and is also restructured the research to concentrate on small business practices that would not harm the bottom line.

Measures of Assessing Successful Inclusion Initiatives

Business leaders can take into consideration several techniques to assess and measure their organizational culture effectiveness. It all starts at first with paying attention to using the most important measuring method, because sometimes leaders choose the wrong assessing approach that fails to apprehend the intricacy of culture from different types of companies. *O'Reilly, C. A., Chatman, J., & Caldwell, D. F. (1991)*

O'Reilly utilized the six factors method to measure organizational effectiveness and performance.

The six factors include:

- 1- Adaptability.
- 2- Integrity.
- 3- Collaborative.
- 4- Result Oriented.
- 5- Customer Oriented.
- 6- Detail Oriented Factors.

The six factors of O'Reilly are a more thorough and appropriate method to assessing the organizational values, beliefs, and norms as quoted in Hacker, (2015). The result from the

evaluation might detect cultural disparities that show the difference between the desired values and the current values in effect.

Fusch and Gillespie (2012) presented a performance analysis model to establish the gap between the desired performance and the actual results in the company. Fusch and Gillespie's performance analysis model demonstrated the way business leaders detect performance gaps by assessing the actual organizational performance to the desired performance. A desired organizational performance contains a thorough study of the company's vision, mission, strategy, and desired results. The actual performance analysis comprises a succinct analysis of internal and external aspects including economic, market, and customer relations.

Fusch and Gillespie stated that the significance of detecting performance gaps as a primary tactic to adopting effective performance interventions technique. Fusch and Gillespie used a work-life approach as a performance intervention to produce a positive effect on organizational culture and performance.

Flamholtz and Randle (2012) discovered an organizational culture evaluation method that involves five crucial elements of organizational culture. The five key aspects are:

- 1- Customer Orientation
- 2- Employee Orientation
- 3- Performance Standards
- 4- Commitment to change.
- 5- Company process orientation.

Customer orientation involves the way the company leaders comprehend their customers and by what means employees assist their customers. Business organizational leaders should have detected 40 values to steer employee's interaction with clients. *O'Reilly, C. A.,*

Chatman, J., & Caldwell, D. F. (1991). The value here is maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction that helps the organizational culture effectiveness.

Several enterprises have been very efficient at building and connecting their employees with their values. Let us take for example employees at Disneyland, where they refer to their customers as “guests” . The language was selected precisely to reveal a message to Disneyland cast members (employees) about the company’s customer orientation. It is solely meant to impact the employees’ interaction with the customers and in fact employees are trained to make customers feel “at home”. The value here is fully customer satisfaction, which enhances the customer’s experience and allows the employees to be part of the mission.

The second aspect for organizational effectiveness is employee orientation, which characterized as the method of encouraging employees in the company. This dimension includes the way people act when working. Business leaders utilize employee orientation to preserve a strong organizational culture in the company. This is a critical cultural area where it shows the picture people hold about themselves and others within the company itself. It shows employees how they are respected within the firm and how important they feel.

The third organizational culture aspect performance standards involve accomplishment and responsibility standards for employees, which describes when and how employees receive evaluations, benchmarks, standards, rewards, and accountability for their accomplishment. Performance standards has an important effect on employee’s work performance and conduct (O’Reilly), it contributes heavily to the organizational culture effectiveness.

The fourth important dimension for the organizational culture effectiveness is commitment to change that includes how the company community views, commits, and reacts to change and innovation. Flamholtz and Randle (2012) revealed that commitment to change and innovation contained the leaders' inclination to lead unforeseen changes and planning to enhance products and services.

The fifth organizational culture effectiveness is a company process orientation (Flamholtz & Randle, 2012). Company process orientation is the company's operational system of the organization, including planning, organizing, decision-making, communication, and social responsibility. Organizational culture effectiveness incorporates economically achievable planning, clear decision-making practices, evident communication channels, and socially responsible organizations . O'Reilly, C. A., Chatman, J., & Caldwell, D. F. (1991)

Effective organizational culture consists of highly driven employees, high level of customer satisfaction, well-founded performance benchmarks, openness to adjustment, improvement, and visibly delineated company process orientation. Although companies have increasingly appreciated the role of corporate culture, the approach used by most organizations to define their core values is exceedingly basic, and most companies have not fully concentrated on all five areas of the cultural effectiveness which have shown to impact financial performance. This, in turn, means that the management of corporate culture will be suboptimal, thus our next chapter that shows the Innovation in inclusion.

Innovation in Inclusion

Research Question 2 – *How can organizations apply effective inclusion initiatives without harming their bottom line?*

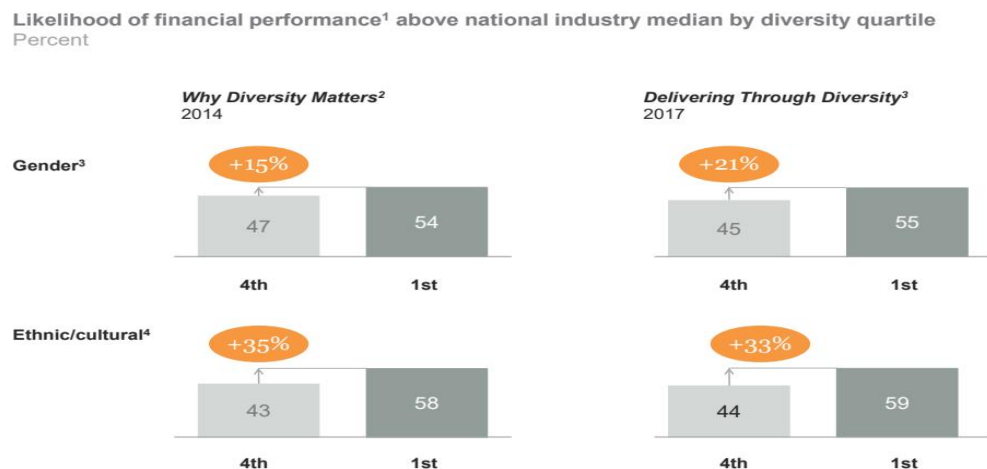
Several profitable companies consider D&I as a source of competitive advantage. For some, it is a matter of social justice, social responsibility, or even legal compliance.

For others, it is vital to their growth strategy, it makes total sense that a diverse and inclusive employee base would be more competitive in a national and international market.

While most companies have recognized the need to focus on diversity and inclusion by designing a D&I office and conducting D&I related activities, they usually realize that talking about inclusion and achieving it are two very separate elements. This is where Innovation in Inclusion comes in to establish an efficient way to have an effective cultural diversity and inclusion because D&I are an enabler of two of the foremost goals, growth, and value creation.

McKinsey & Company conducted a research “*Why Diversity Matters*” where they discovered that companies in the highest quartile for gender diversity on their executive teams were 15% more expected to experience above-average profitability than companies in the fourth quartile. Three years later, the number climbed to 21% and resumed to be statistically significant. For ethnic & cultural diversity, the 2014 discovery was a 35% probability of high performance, comparable to the 2017 finding of a 33% likelihood of high performance on EBIT margin, both statistically significant (Figure 1)

Figure 1 The correlations between diversity and performance still hold



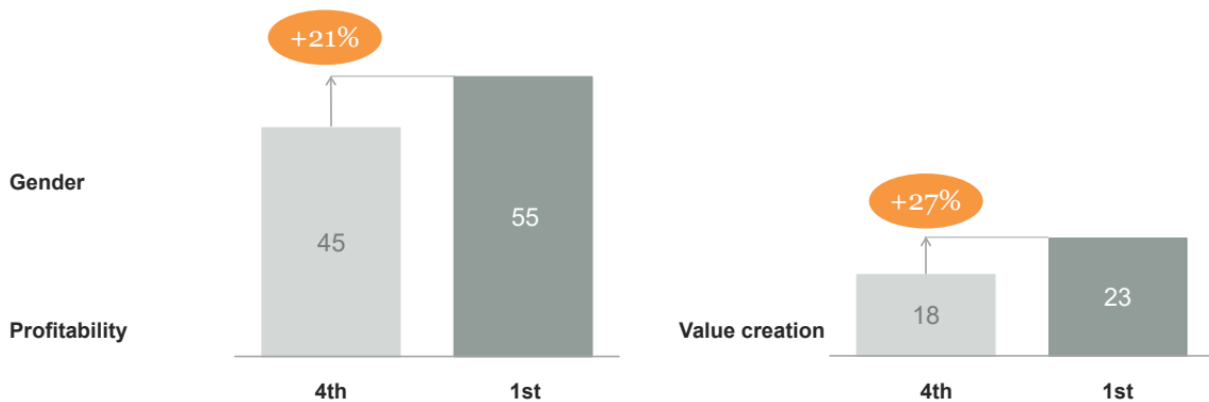
McKinsey & Company research showed that gender diversity relates directly with profitability and value creation, while ethnic and cultural diversity linked with profitability. In their 2017 data, they have established a positive link between gender diversity leaders and economic performance where top quartile companies were 21% more likely than fourth quartile companies to beat national business peers on EBIT margin. They were also, 27% more likely than fourth quartile companies to have industry-leading performance on longer-term value creation, as they measured using economic profit margin (Figure 2). McKinsey & Company also reviewed data regarding ethnic & cultural diversity in six countries where in 2014 they have deduced that most ethnically and culturally diverse executive teams are 33% more likely to outperform their business peers when it comes to profitability (Figure 3) *The Financial Benefits of Diversity: (2017)*

Figure 2

How gender diversity correlates with financial performance

Likelihood of financial performance¹ above national industry median by diversity quartile
Percent

Executive team
N = 991

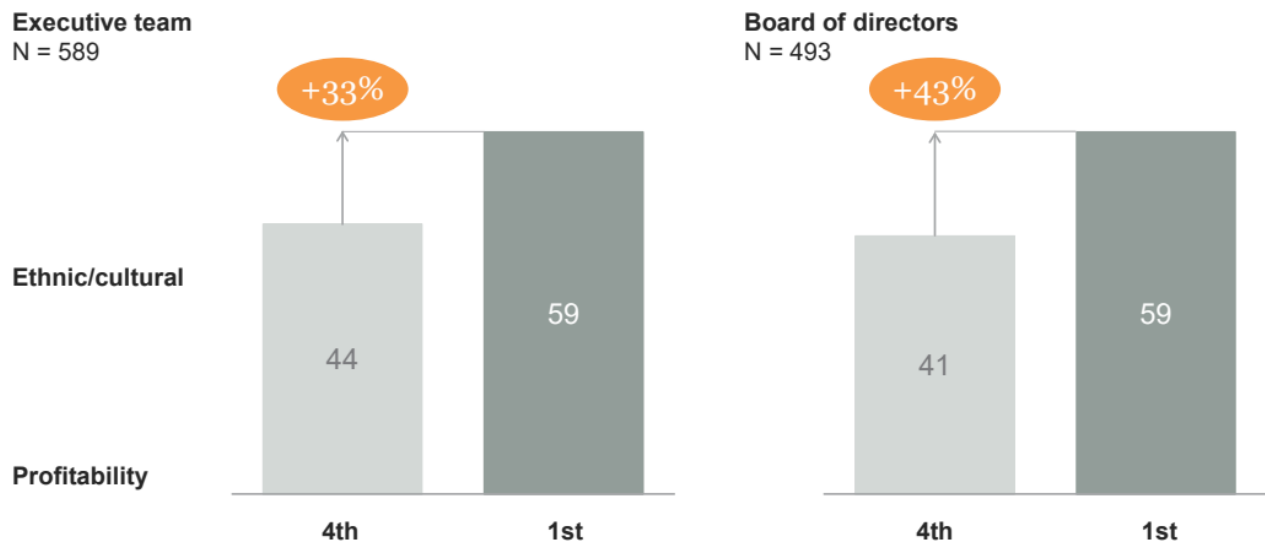


Source: McKinsey Diversity Matters database

Figure 3

How ethnic diversity correlates with profitability

Likelihood of financial performance¹ above national industry median by diversity quartile
Percent

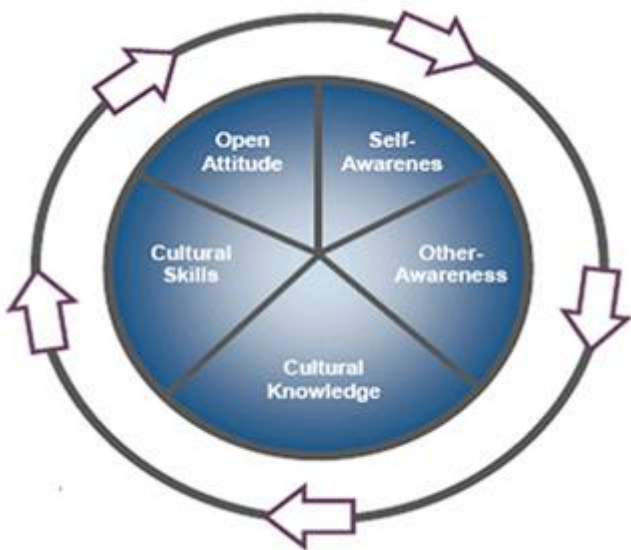


Source: McKinsey Diversity Matters database.

In a whole, McKinsey's results showed that Diversity and Inclusion continues to correlate strongly with company financial performance locally, nationally, and globally. They have also emphasized on developing an inclusive company culture has a high significance in boosting the organizational effectiveness and works as a sign to stakeholders that the company genuinely appreciates and values the community and clients they serve.

Aiming the focus on inclusion begins with the creation of cultural agility, which is the power to successfully navigate, convey, connect, and perform well in diverse cultural settings, culturally agile leaders are flexible and adaptable (Figure 4). *The Financial Benefits of Diversity: (2017)*

Figure 4: Cultural Agility Learning Process



Open attitude is the requirement for joining in the understanding process of cultivating cross-cultural effectiveness.

Self-awareness enables **other-awareness** and must be built in **cross-cultural knowledge** to become useful.

Cultural knowledge must be transformed into **cross-cultural skills** to become effective.

Source: Malini Janakiraman

Creating cultural agility begins with an open attitude that leads to self-awareness, other awareness, knowledge, and skills to apply the knowledge. Leaders that are reluctant in using this change mechanism can harmfully influence the company through unconscious biases and fall behind in using a diverse and inclusive leadership style to further customer relations, gain new clients and retain the proper talent.

Micro-behaviors also play an essential part on the journey to cultural agility. These are small, subtle often unspoken, and unconscious behaviors that communicate dispositions, mindsets, prejudices, and emotions. These behaviors include body language, voice attitude, and micro-expressions that positively or negatively influence others. The behaviors place some at a disadvantage and others at an advantage point.

Companies are realizing that innovation and building innovative results and procedures frequently entails a unique way of thinking. A diverse, inclusive, and culturally agile

environment puts itself into forming challenges in new ways and creating different solutions.

Four key skills are essential to achieving cultural agility.

- **Cultural due diligence:** Effective assessment of possible effects of culture in relations.
- **Style-switching:** Skills to use a wide, flexible behavioral collection to accomplish person's goals.
- **Cultural dialogue:** Illuminating cultural foundations of behavior and accomplishment, close cultural differences, and generate cultural cooperation using communication.
- **Cultural mentoring:** Advising, teaching, and coaching individuals in their domain of influence to:
 - a. Acknowledge cultural foundations and outcomes of their behavior.
 - b. Recognize cultural and behavioral conditions for true inclusion.
 - c. Support change through inclusive actions, procedures, and tactics.

Leaders with these talents support employees' differences and, by example, demonstrate that they are inclusive and diverse. These skills ultimately make them more effective leaders.

According to Malini Janakiraman here are some Practical Suggestions to Start the Journey of Cultural Agility: Malini Janakiraman, (2016)

- Check assumptions and biases & develop a non-negative attitude towards differences. Always ask if the assumptions are based on facts.

- Assume positive intention. Participate in meetings and discussions with a positive, win-win attitude to build an inclusive environment.
- Think and pay attention before talking to cultivate an inclusive behavior.
- Check social aspects and collaboration patterns for exclusion behaviors, allow everyone to have a voice.
- Acknowledge everyone's behavior and how it influences group behavior.
- Participate and inspire others in understanding differences and experiences in a non-judgmental setting.
- Deliver individual advice and coaching to convert exclusion behaviors.

To be successful, organizations and corporate leaders must embrace the differences people represent and demonstrate they are inclusive as well as diverse. Leaders lead by example.

Small businesses can benefit greatly from D&I initiatives just like medium and large companies. Diversity and Inclusion initiatives can boost productivity and hence profitability in the company. With diverse groups comes innovative thinking and problem solving from an array of standpoints.

A research completed by Jennifer A. Chatman states that the association between organizational culture and financial performance remains mysterious, however early research suggests that a strong culture that associates member's behavior with organizational goals enhances financial performance. Small businesses can embrace Diversity and Inclusion by incorporating best practices that align with their financial objectives, mission, vision, and organizational goals.

Diversity by itself can essentially generate conflict, especially in the areas of communication and revenue rates. *O'Reilly, C. A., Chatman, J., & Caldwell, D. F. (1989).* Therefore, for companies to exploit on the benefits of a diverse environment, those conflicts must be aggressively handled in a culturally delicate approach. Therefore, an important method that encourages inclusion is to have a thorough diversity management plan in place that includes all levels of the company and ensures that diversity goals are known, shared, and in line with wider inclusion goals. In addition, these said goals must align with the company's organizational goals and values.

Best practices might be pinpointed with key touch points of the talent management lifecycle. Those addressed include **recruitment, branding, learning and development, health and welfare, performance, and succession planning.**

Talent acquisition/recruitment: The role of hiring diverse talent is to insert a diverse set of perspectives within the company to improve organizational performance both internally using the decision making and externally with customer outreach. *Kulik & Roberson, (2008).* One recruitment strategy that is often efficient is to depend on internal networks to harness an external network of appropriate candidates. Rabina Shaheen, Author of "Creativity and Education", noted that these goals cannot be implemented effectively without concurrently addressing sound internal retention and development strategies. *Shaheen (2010)*

We have established that recruiting a diverse applicant is very important, however it is generally very costly. Small business could not afford to regroup and reorganize their recruitment plan to include a more diverse pool. Therefore, diversity does not only have to come from new hires. Other avenues of the business can also be changed to be more diverse, like using different vendors with various backgrounds, attracting diverse customers can create diversity, creating inclusion within the company's employees and

promoting diverse people to management levels from within the organization can help the organizational culture.

Diversity and Inclusion can always come from within the organizations, company leaders should be more open to suggestions, transparent about their current situations and critique their own biases and prejudices.

Branding: Employer branding signifies the benefits that potential employees may connect with a specific company (Wilden, Gudergan, & Lings, 2010). Branding is a vital component of determining a company as diverse and inclusive. Avery (2003) suggested that organizational advertisements integrating demographically diverse pictures may boost organizational desirability for diverse employees. Moreover, involving a strong diversity statement in job posts and recruitment publicity that is sincerely reflective of organizational philosophy is another component of effective branding.

Research shows that both minority and non-minority demographic groups perceive companies with a diversity statement positively (Kim & Gelfand, 2003). Branding could also be a very costly initiative for small companies; thus, my suggestion would be for all small businesses to always start from within when it comes to diversity and inclusion. We can use branding while educating everyone at the company on how diversity is an important tool in the longevity of the company. The first things small businesses should start with is commitment to diversity and making sure that everyone in the company understand how much we all benefit from different thoughts, backgrounds, and perspectives when making decisions. Branding is not at all spending money on big posters and billboards, branding is an intrinsic boost that comes from within the company goals and reaches all company facets with full understating and dedication, the main key here is communication, acceptance, and collaboration.

Learning and Development: Mentoring is a method used to both preserve and build diverse employees (Kulik & Roberson, 2008). The efficacy of mentorship programs often affects views of prejudice and social inclusion and may alleviate the negative impacts of stereotype risks on minority performance. Mentorship could be considered as an expensive tool when trying to balance between finances, products, services and employees and customers.

However, if mentorship were looked at from the simplest daily listening and advising would be a better way for employees. I would refer to the butterfly affect, for example a small company with three employees and one boss, if the boss daily helps and mentors the employees on a constructive inclusive way, when the company grows, and those same employees have people work under them they themselves will do the same with their employees and therefore the company would have instilled a diverse and yet inclusive behavior from the beginning utilizing simple mentorship tools.

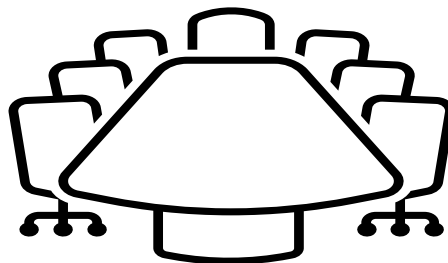
Performance Management: It is not unusual for diverse groups to have increased performance because of their developing a common identity (Earley & Mosakowski, 2000). Research has demonstrated that participants of diverse groups come to appreciate and understand group complementarities, learning over time to benefit from differences in behavior, values, and beliefs (Hambrick, Davison, Snell, & Snow, 1998) and thereby advance communication and collaboration.

Employees' perspectives of a diverse environment drastically effect their job-related attitudes and behaviors and, thus, performance. In this case, it is greatly encouraged for companies to enable employees to be their true selves and create tools around what matters to them. Best practices linked to performance management should be adapted to a planned and active management of diversity that seeks to build a strong diversity

atmosphere and offers sufficient opportunities for diverse teams to create trust and interaction overtime.

Succession Planning: One last section of talent management cycle in which best practices may be found is succession planning. Successful application in this area spins around a few aspects including the commitment of mentors, showing traits of success, and implementing a strategic planning process to form an empowering community. Furthermore, cohesive, and inclusive tactics that attract diversity, business, and human resource strategies have been considered the most effective when it comes to succession planning (Greer & Virick, 2008).

Greer and Virick (2008) defined several best practices established corresponding to this type of cohesive tactic to succession planning. They recommended that alignment between business strategy and succession planning is the crucial component of the base upon which a value basis for diverse succession can be built. For small businesses, succession planning might be looked at as a far fetch goal. However, it is very important to establish from the beginning that leaders are encouraged to include goals in line with diversity in evaluation the performance of managers and executives, as well as answerability for succession objectives adopting diversity. The purpose of succession planning is to ensure the continuity of the business and to identify the next cohort of leaders, this will not only make sure the business is sustained but also leads in its market.



Chapter 4: The Study

Introduction

I believe that how we implement Cultural Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are pivotal to the growth of a small business. It will be important to the growth of a company to also have a diverse decision-making team.

All too often, many ethnic groups are left out of the management team or have positions that do not participate in the company's decision-making meetings. This will later prove to be a disadvantage for most companies that continue those practices.

With the globalization of most target markets, companies are bound to have different people and cultures in the workplace. We no longer work in a traditional environment where the staff speak the same language and follow the same traditions, customs, holidays, and family life. Because the workplace population has changed significantly, I propose we seize the opportunity of having different cultures by including them in strategic decision making.

I believe properly implemented inclusion initiatives of various cultures can improve the bottom line for small businesses. My goal is to carve out an evidence-based path to encourage small businesses to begin their advantageous journey of Cultural Diversity and Inclusion.

Research Design

My conceptual variable for this research was to highlight the opportunities missed by not properly applying the federal statute of inclusion. I identified the level of compliance with said federal statute. In addition, the price Small Businesses will continue to pay if they do not engage in the practice of diversity with inclusion in

strategic decision making. The operational properties employ the collection and analyzation of the following variables: Fiscal soundness assessment, demographic analysis of the employment pool, and org charts to identify leadership.

The research commenced by the collection of quantitative data from companies throughout the state of Florida. Using surveys, data mining, and analyzation of the Conceptual and Operation properties of the observed variables, I stand hopeful it will begin to shed light on positive trends, preferences, actions, and opinions.

I conducted a qualitative study using quantitative data to better understand the sampling pool. I learned early-on that while companies had a quality inclusion model, they were not implementing them with many participants. This led to skewed results for the qualitative analysis. I understood that if I were going to analyze true empirical data, I would need to use a Quantitative approach as well. By using the blended approach, I observed not only the number of companies offering Inclusion and Diversity initiatives, I also was able to quantify the volume of participants impacted by the initiative. Through this method, I obtained impact data based on the sampling of a larger group instead of a small group advertising positive data with fewer participants.

It is important to note that the new COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we communicate, work, and socialize. The challenges in the workplace will certainly uncover new initiatives to overcome. COVID-19 has brought different views and methods to our daily work life and my research includes the impact of COVID-19 on diversity and inclusion.

Population

For the past 3 years, I have worked with several small business throughout Florida that hired diverse cultures in their workplace. I observed that engaging a diverse team had noticeable effects on their revenue. By analyzing their audited financials from 2017 through 2020, I identified an increase of revenue by 8% compared to the revenue generated by companies with less than 50% diverse of a population.

Upon further analysis, I noticed that the certain cultures were able to market better than others. In addition, some cultures were better at negotiating and closing deals. Both of those elements led to the anticipated support that diversity and inclusion makes a positive impact in small business in Florida. *2017-19 audited financials and org-charts 2020 - Otero Consulting Group(2020) NOTICE: As each company has non-disclosure agreements, I could not provide identifiable information.*

However, the data collected was as follows:

In addition, I gained a thorough understanding on how to introduce diversity and inclusion initiatives into the workplace. Recently, globalization of the workspace has allowed us to work in places where you are communicating with at least with 5 to 6 different cultures a day, sometimes speaking 3 to 4 languages and even working in different time zones. Through this study I anticipate my research will show the advantages of employing different cultures in the workplace. It is possible that if a small business learns how to manage the different talents imbedded in those diverse employees, they will be able to utilize those resources to succeed as a small business and have a positive economic impact.

Instruments

I implemented the qualitative method for the analyzation of data collected. I noted however that as part of the process, I was compelled to add the quantitative method as a research tools due to the unveiling of new discoveries. This enhanced the depth of my approach. The data was collected through surveys. I also included workforce development research, previous market studies, and publications.

Data Collection

In this study, I included diverse organizations from industry to education. I used the following data points to collect targeted information. I reviewed over 40 publications that would give me a better understanding of the collected data and identify trends and best practices.

Data Point 1: The list below is a sample of the survey questions I asked members of leadership:

In your organization chart, would you say that the leadership team is diverse?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

What percentage of your leadership team is of a different ethnic or racial background?

- ☐ Less than 10%
- ☐ Less than 30%
- ☐ Less than 50%
- ☐ 75% or Higher

Do you have diversity training?

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

What percentage of your staff participate in your diversity and Inclusion training?

- ☐ Less than 10%
- ☐ Less than 30%
- ☐ Less than 50%
- ☐ 75% or Higher

Data Point 2: Analyze previous research materials to include:

- Dissertations and thesis materials
- Industry reports from reputable publishers
- Corporate training materials
- Economic Impact studies from various publishers

Data Point 3: Read articles and manuals from publishers of related subjects.

Data Analysis

Small Business Owner Surveys

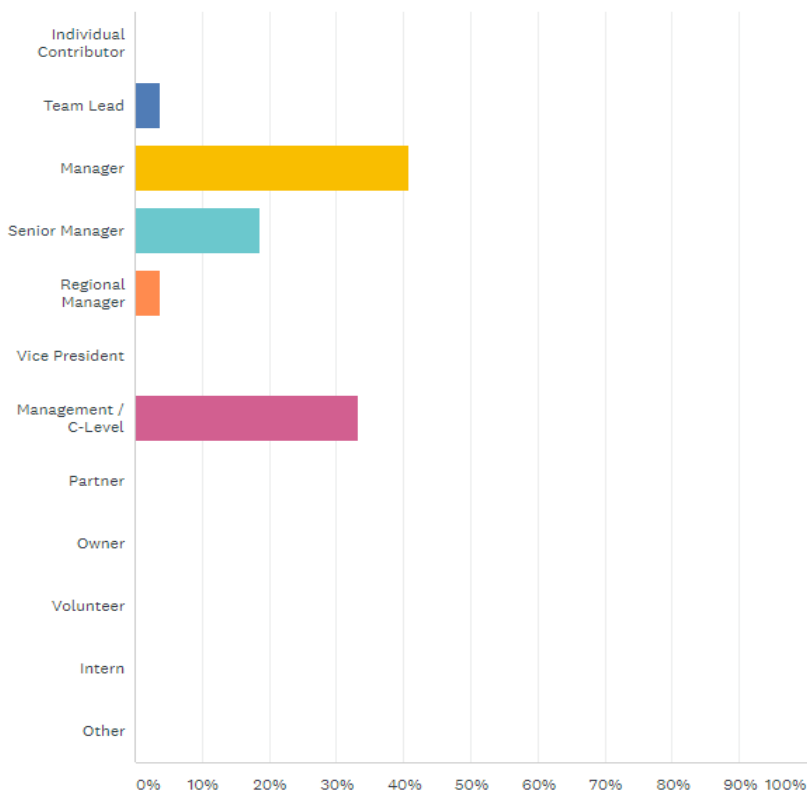
Our attempt to capture 50 small business owners was a challenge as most of the companies that agreed to the survey initially were not opened during our sampling period. However, out of the 50 companies in Florida that were attempted, 30 responded and 27 of the responses were usable. Unfortunately, 3 of the responses were later destroyed due to the owner(s) reporting possible contamination.

Survey Response were as follow:

Q1

What is your job role?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0

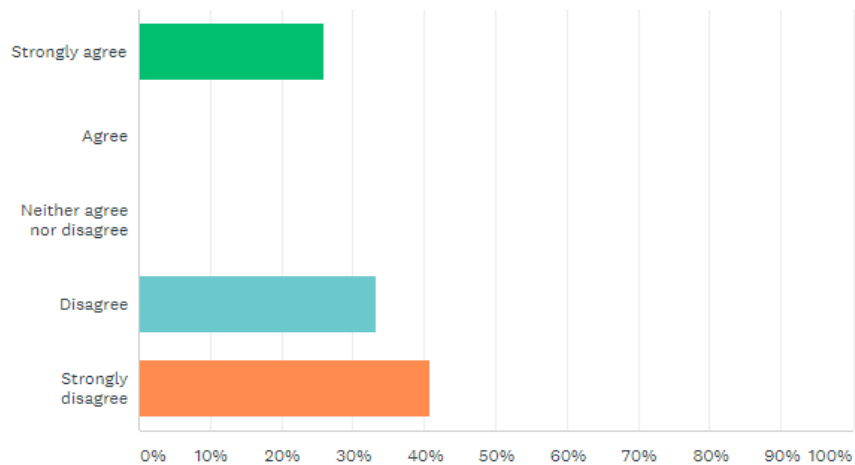


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Individual Contributor	0.00%	0
▼ Team Lead	3.70%	1
▼ Manager	40.74%	11
▼ Senior Manager	18.52%	5
▼ Regional Manager	3.70%	1
▼ Vice President	0.00%	0
▼ Management / C-Level	33.33%	9
▼ Partner	0.00%	0
▼ Owner	0.00%	0
▼ Volunteer	0.00%	0
▼ Intern	0.00%	0
▼ Other	0.00%	0
TOTAL		27

Q2

In your organizational chart, would you say that the leadership team is diverse?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0

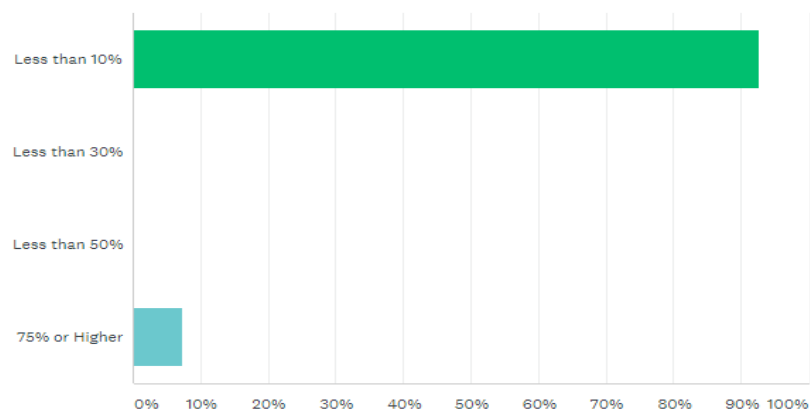


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Strongly agree	25.93%	7
▼ Agree	0.00%	0
▼ Neither agree nor disagree	0.00%	0
▼ Disagree	33.33%	9
▼ Strongly disagree	40.74%	11
TOTAL		27

Q3

What percentage of your leadership team is of a different ethnic or racial background?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0

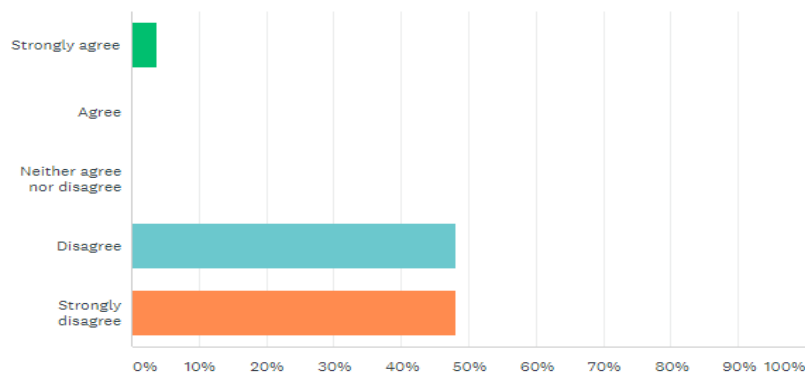


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Less than 10%	92.59% 25
Less than 30%	0.00% 0
Less than 50%	0.00% 0
75% or Higher	7.41% 2
TOTAL	27

Q4

Do you have diversity training?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0

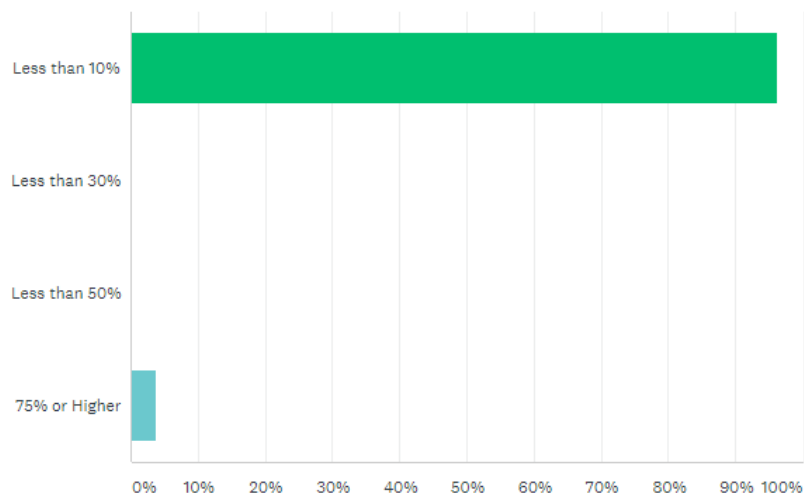


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly agree	3.70% 1
Agree	0.00% 0
Neither agree nor disagree	0.00% 0
Disagree	48.15% 13
Strongly disagree	48.15% 13
TOTAL	27

Q5

What percentage of your staff participate in your diversity and Inclusion training?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
▼ Less than 10%	96.30%	26
▼ Less than 30%	0.00%	0
▼ Less than 50%	0.00%	0
▼ 75% or Higher	3.70%	1
TOTAL		27

Summary of Survey Results:

1. In your organization chart, would you say that the leadership team is diverse?

26% of small businesses in Florida reported to have diversity in their leadership team.

2. What percentage of your leadership team is of a different ethnic or racial background?

Less than 10% of small businesses responded that their leadership is of a different race or ethnic background.

3. Do you have diversity training? Y/N

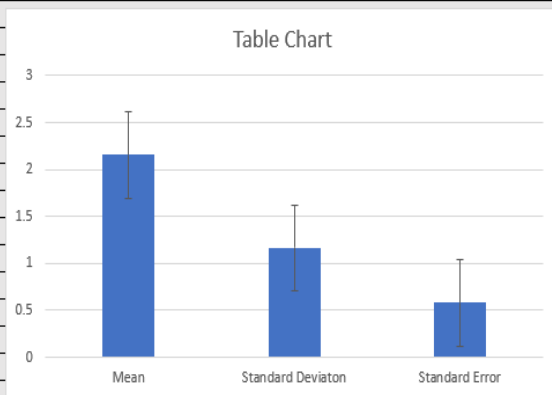
Only 1 out of 27 small businesses reported to having diversity training in-house.

4. What percentage of your staff participate in your diversity and Inclusion training?

Only 1 in 27 small businesses reported that their employees have taken diversity training.

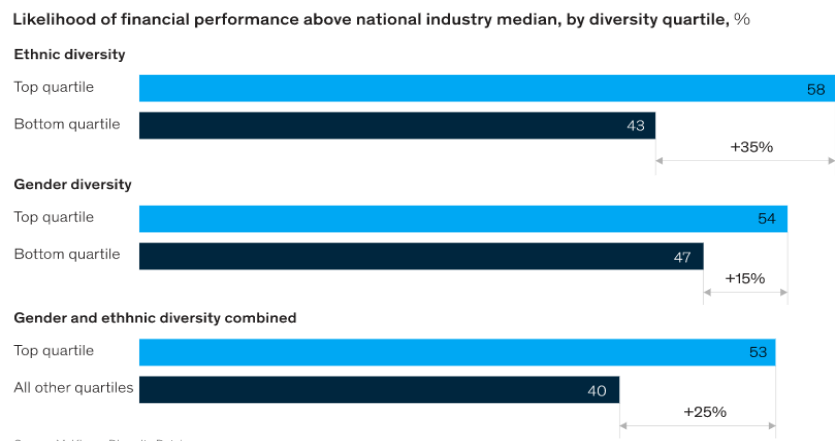
Standard Error Calculations

QUESTIONS	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	Mean
In your organization chart, would you say that the leadership team is diverse?	7	0	9	11	27	2.888889
Do you have diversity training?	1	0	13	13	27	3.407407
	Less than 10%	Less than 30%	Less than 50%	75% or Higher	Total	Mean
What percentage of your leadership team is of a different ethnic or racial background?	25	0	0	2	27	1.222222
What percentage of your staff participate in your diversity and Inclusion training?	26	0	0	1	27	1.111111
	Strongly Agree	1		Less than 10%	1	
	Agree	2		Less than 30%	2	
	Disagree	3		Less than 50%	3	
	Strongly Disagree	4		75% or Higher	4	
				Mean	2.157407407	
				Standard Deviator	1.164312734	
				Standard Error	0.582156367	



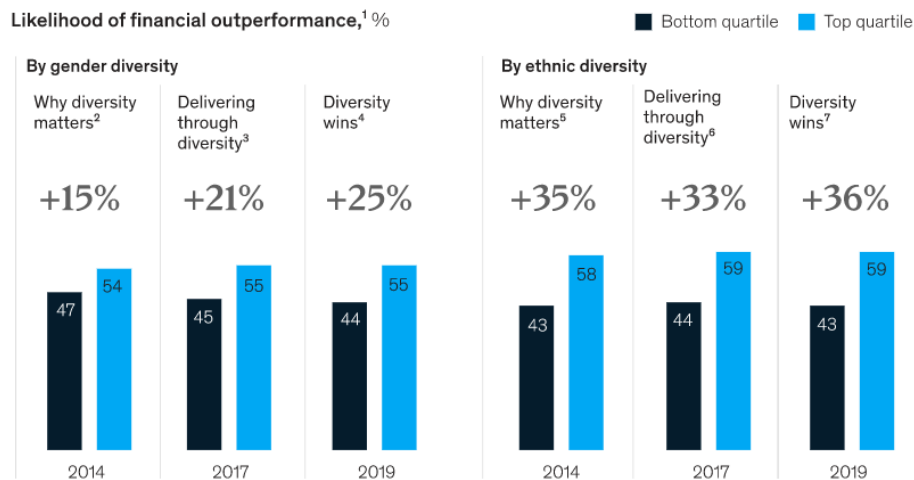
Financial Performance

The data suggest diversity correlates with better financial performance (figure 1)



A robust organizational culture is an essential component to improve and increase the organization's profitability and financial performance. In the United States, there is a direct link between racial and ethnic diversity and better financial performance: for every 10 percent increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rise 0.8 percent. (*McKinsey & Company, Why Diversity Matters? – 2015*)

The business case for diversity in executive teams remains strong.



The chart above indicates that businesses that thrive for diversity have a likelihood of financial outperformance. There is a clear way that diversity and inclusion influence the performance of a company. There is sufficient data showing companies with greater diversity outperform companies with less diversity. For instance, McKinsey found that executive gender and ethnic diversity correlate with profitability. However, this statistical correlation might be surpassed if another variable is added to the picture.

To view it from McKinney's standpoint let us put both variables together, Diversity caused Financial performance. However, there could be a third variable that could

increase both variables. In this case, I believe that inclusion is that third variable.
(McKinsey & Company, *Why Diversity Matters?* – 2015)

“Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work.”

Andres Tapia

There is evidence where in different situations diversity by itself does not connect with higher performance, which makes total sense. Envision a team in which everyone performs at their highest level, and individuals cooperate seamlessly. Presume now that one team member feels excluded and becomes dissatisfied, their productivity will drop, and cause ripple effects as other team members must deal with the disruption.

In conclusion, both diversity and inclusion can add positively to the success of a company. However, as companies push for diversity, it is highly encouraged they consider the importance of inclusion because diversity drives performance through inclusion.

Innovation

Once all the aspects of an inclusive environment are in order, inclusion develops an atmosphere where innovation can flourish. Innovation starts with creativity, and creativity requires taking risks, which allows people to take chances into the unknown. When an inclusive environment is present, most people are open to taking risks and innovating because judgement and prejudice are not present. According to a research completed by *Juliet Bourke and Bernadette Dillon*, it showed that inclusive cultures are six times more likely to be innovative. In another research done by Deloitte, they have concluded that companies with inclusive cultures are six times as

likely to be innovative and agile. (*Deloitte Review, Juliet Bourke, and Bernadette Dillon 2018*)

Diverse and Collaborative cultures strengthen the employee's trust in the company, and when organizations foster continuing dedication to making sure employees feel included and valued, the result is an inclusive environment that is productive and innovative.

According to a survey completed by BCG, Diversity, and Innovation survey 2017, it showed that companies that reported above-average diversity on their management teams also reported innovation revenue that was **19 percentage points higher** than that of companies with below-average leadership diversity, 45% of total revenue versus just 26% (See Figure 2). (*BCG, Diversity, and Innovation survey 2017*)

Figure 2: BCG Diversity & Innovation Survey



Competitive Advantage

In a diverse environment, competitive advantage is achieved not only by acknowledging diversity but also by forming a workplace of inclusion, where personnel work toward a common purpose while feeling encouraged which effect positively their productivity and employee dedication.

To create a competitive advantage based on inclusion, the concept should encompass all functions and procedures of the company. Diversity & Inclusion does not apply just to hiring processes, it is also related to job advancements, decision-making, product and service expansion and other organizational developments.

McKinsey's recent Delivering Through Diversity article uncovered organizations that incorporate gender diversity on their executive teams were more **competitive** and **21%** more likely to experience above-average profitability. They additionally had a **27%** chance of surpassing their competitors on longer-term value creation. It has been projected that sealing the gender gap would add **\$28 trillion** to the value of the global economy by 2025, a 26% increase. (*McKinsey & Company, Delivering Through Diversity – 2017*)

Companies should consider transferring from diversity as a plan to inclusion as a business approach since inclusive companies are twice likely to meet or even exceeds their financial goals according to a research conducted by Catalyst. Furthermore, the same research uncovered that those same companies are six times more likely to innovate, eight times to enhance business results, and 35 percent more likely to surpass their industry peers, thus competitive advantage.

The idea is obvious, inclusion is a vital component for business accomplishment and crucial to developing the future leaders. (*Catalyst, Why Diversity Matters 2013*)

Marketing & Branding

Multicultural approach is essential in today's modern society, brands that have launched inclusivity campaigns have seen record breaking sales and growth during the run of their campaign.

In 2019, Denny's introduced a campaign called "See You at Denny's" in both English and Spanish languages with message of inclusiveness encouraged by the diversity of Denny's guest gathering of modern, multicultural families and friends dining together.

This campaign had an immediate reaction to Denny's website visitation upon its launch, in the final month of the campaign, unique website traffic was up +85 percent among persons 18 and older compared to the month prior to the campaign launch. (*Why Diversity & Inclusion Campaigns Drive Brand Outcomes*, by Jason Wiese, 2020)

In September of 2018, Nike announced its first in series of "Dream" spots celebrating rich diversity found in sports for its ongoing "Just Do It" campaign. The first ad ("Dream Crazy") showcased controversial NFL star and rights campaigner Colin Kaepernick declaring, "Believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything."

Nike initiated the ad at the start of its third quarter and continued to see its highest third quarter profits ever up to that point in time. Moreover, high sales have been attained in each quarter ever since the unveiling of the "Dream Crazy" Kaepernick spot through early 2020. (*Why Diversity & Inclusion Campaigns Drive Brand Outcomes*, by Jason Wiese, 2020)



Procter & Gamble's (P&G) 'We See Equal' Campaign, was designed to combat gender bias and work towards equality for all, portrayed boys and girls confronting gender stereotypes. The company has a record of supporting the issue, and also records 45% of its leaders and a third of its board as women.

P&G's evident commitment to equality within its own personnel entailed that the movement came across as genuine and as a sincere drive for transformation.

It is a hard to understand why any companies would take inclusion off the table when it is an essential tool for businesses who value innovation and divergent ideas. We are aware that diversity and inclusion are hard for small companies to apply, though D&I turns out to be the best tools companies can use.

Over the previous two years, scholars have found that diverse and inclusive work environments increase profitability, culture, and public perception. *(P&G launches We See Equal Campaign by Minda Smiley, 2017)*

Talent Retention and Acquisition

It is expected that by 2025, most of the workforce will be millennials. Populating about 75% of the global small businesses, the Y1 generation will be making leadership decisions and managing the economy for decades to come. Their decisions will impact the world during one of the most pivotal moments in human history. *(World Economic Forum 2020)*

Their decisions will be like no other generation has had the responsibility to carry on their shoulders. They will decide on how the workforce will look like and how the workplace culture will evolve.

No longer will Top-Down Management be tolerated nor the shaming of weaker coworkers. One of the many things to be said about millennials is that fact that they really do have a unique perspective on diversity. As they were raised during the explosion of the information age, the access to empirical science facts allowed them to understand that diversity is real and should be embraced instead of scrutinized, shamed, or isolated.

In the eyes of a millennial, everyone should be treated the same and have the same opportunities to succeed. This also means that everyone to be included in decision making strategies. These views have never been part of the mainstream workforce leadership.



Sadly “older generations tend to view diversity through the lenses of race, demographics, equality and representation, millennials see diversity as a melding of varying experiences, different backgrounds and individual perspectives. They view the ideal workplace as a supportive environment

that gives space to varying perspectives on a given issue.” (*World Economic Forum 2020*)

“The 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey shows that 74% of these individuals believe their organization is more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion. If businesses are looking to hire and sustain a millennial workforce, diversity must be a key part of the

company culture. This 2016 survey shows that 47% of millennials are actively looking for diversity and inclusion when sizing up potential employers.” (*World Economic Forum 2020*)

In a 2017 survey by PwC, 54% of women and 45% of men stated they examined if an organizational had a diversity & inclusion strategy before accepting their position. In addition, 61% of women and 48% of men said they evaluated the diversity of the company’s leadership team when choosing to accept an offer. In conclusion, by fostering diversity and inclusion companies can improve their possibilities of bringing in great people and retaining them. (*PwC, Winning the fight for female talent, 2017*)



Chapter 5: Results, Findings and Discussion

Workplace Impact of Cultural Inclusion in Decision Making

A Qualitative and Quantitative Blended Study

Limitations of Study

The limitations of a study are those attributes of design that affect the results' interpretation. Limitations generally originate from the framework and design. All research has limitations, as none is designed perfectly (Marshall & Rossman, 1989). It is very substantial to mention that not enough conclusive research has been conducted in the field of inclusion. Therefore, the significance of previous research done has been basically assessed to allow an input into the subject matter. The researcher advises that leaders who assess the results should use caution in following specific course of action as it reflects the perceptions of the companies involved in the research and hence not be presumed entirely applicable to all organizations. Other limitations found is that possible personal bias of participants in different surveys were presented in this research.



Results

This research was undertaken to better understand the impact of inclusion in the workplace. Better yet, to focus on small businesses in Florida USA. The discovery of this study was quite revealing. It implied that during important social and political changes over the past few years, companies are taking steps to improve diversity and inclusion in the workplace. As a result, they can successfully explore the advantages of inclusion in their workforce by considering the concept of diversity and inclusion as a business strategy rather than a regulatory compliance mandate. The importance of considering what tools are necessary in managing a diverse and inclusive workforce are supposed to be ingrained within the company's processes, policies, and mission.

This research also supplied the method that a company should incorporate within the inclusion values and practices for current procedures that allows organizational growth and positive outcomes. The purpose of this research was as well a tool to define strategies used and difficulties encountered by small businesses in creating an inclusive workplace for diverse personnel and what measures and recommendations could help small businesses that are seeking to nurture an inclusive workplace.

In the end, the intent of this study was a humanitarian effort to also provide best practices and instruments to highlight the importance of an inclusive environment and how to sustain effective workplace inclusion. I sought to present the existing knowledge and current tools used by leading organizations to improve on inclusion. By transferring that knowledge into accessible information, these methods could be useful to small businesses in their journey to an inclusive work environment.

Findings and Discussion

Awareness, training, funding, and results measurement are the tools to achieving inclusion in the workplace as a small business. Leading companies already sought the opportunity to have a diverse workplace and connect diversity to inclusion by spending a lot of time and resources on awareness and training their employees to remove their own biases and exclude prejudice by creating a safe environment and enhancing their inclusion initiatives.

Small businesses are considered the heart of the US economy, I would recommend that the federal government needs to step up and offer programs and trainings to small businesses regarding the importance of inclusion and the impact that it could positively have on the economy in the upcoming years.

The research tested a summary of findings that connects the relationship between diversity, inclusion, financial performance, innovation, competitive advantage, and talent acquisition, while there is not enough empirical research conducted on inclusion, the aim is to start the thread on the importance of inclusion and how it affects not only the organization but economy in its whole. Small businesses can gain from D&I initiatives just like any medium and large companies because these tools have the power to boost profitability and innovation and allow small businesses to thrive in different national and international markets.

The focus should begin with the company's leadership, as the research states, it is feasible for SMBs to start using inclusion in their advantage without harming their bottom line, they can always start small and take it as a long-term goal of the company. Leaders can always focus on starting in a marginal way by committing to making diversity a personal priority, having the modesty to admit mistakes and collaborate with others, be able to confess their own unconscious bias and acknowledge their blind

spots, allow curiosity and be curious about other people's experiences, cultures and differences and lastly be effective in collaboration in encouraging and empowering diverse thinking and psychological wellbeing. These important traits could drive the small business world into a different wave of growth and success.

Recommendation for Future Research

There are limitations to the present work, creating abundant opportunities for future research. While there is rich research in theoretical discussion and findings regarding diversity & inclusion, little existing of empirical research associated with inclusion in the work environment and its benefit to companies in the U.S and internationally. Furthermore, organizational culture and inclusion studies are vast yet typically analyzed as individual disciplines from the company. These realities propose vigorous occasion for potential research.

Multiple small business & industry focus: Reproduce this research with the added element of increasing it to a numerous case study methodology to examine inclusion within different small businesses in different industries. This would enable the assessment of inclusive leadership traits in more than one size organization and industry, this will allow small businesses to utilize best practices in a deepen and authenticated way.

New Generation Inclusive Leadership: Conduct further exploratory research in the developing area of inclusion through qualitative research concentrating on the new generation of leaders (millennials) and how they portray inclusion in the workforce. In the End, the knowledge earned from developing research on inclusion can serve as a tool for helping non-inclusive companies to become more inclusive in a culture which is increasingly co-dependent without harming their bottom line.

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