



Catalysts for Common Good

## Forming Your DEI Team\*: Creating a Safe Environment and Unleashing Motivation

The following, to be implemented at the very beginning of the formation of the team, will greatly enhance the likelihood of the sustainability of and success for the team:

- a. Identify a team made up of people from all levels of the organization and with a diversity that represents as much of your organization as possible, i.e., the diversity to be found among your general stakeholder groups and/or anyone impacted the organization's work.
- b. Creating a context with **psychological safety** (i.e., during initial conversations):
  - i. Individuals will share but almost all participants' time is spent listening (this is by design and "on purpose")
  - ii. Everyone speaks and listens with best intent
  - iii. Allow for sharing of information and ideas without inviting statements of support or critique (this part of the discussion will come later – see "*Foundations for your team*" document)
  - iv. Giving everyone, without judgment, the freedom to share or not share in response to the questions/prompts in items viii – xiv below
  - v. Explicitly stating that differences are valuable to the team, even if they also make us uncomfortable
  - vi. For the initial portion of the group's work, let the dialogue determine the pace; place less emphasis on an agenda and/or the amount of time being taken for a particular topic
  - vii. The power holders in the room (e.g., the board member, the CEO, the Director, etc.) must only listen and participate like the others; the power holders should not be given special privilege

Questions for the group to discuss in order to build psychological safety:

- viii. What is one thing you are looking forward to accomplishing through this work?
  - ix. Describe an experience in which you felt excluded.
  - x. Describe an experience in which you felt included.
  - xi. Describe the conditions that existed which caused you to feel included.
  - xii. What are your individual hopes and goals?
  - xiii. What are your individual resources and skills that you bring to the group?
  - xiv. What concerns do you have about entering this work?
- c. Ensure the following so that team members are **motivated**:

- i. Invite participants to reflect on the personal benefit to them regarding the purpose of the DEI work. As similarly noted previously, this “benefit” should be viewed through a lens of “best intent” and not “malicious” or “selfish” intent. The person should be able to answer “yes” to the following question: Will the benefit to me also contribute positively to the purpose of the DEI team?
  - ii. Invite participants to reflect on how their individual goals align with the DEI team goals. If they do not align the individual should reflect on whether they should continue to be on the DEI team. If the individual decides to leave the team they should be given opportunity to share matter-of-factly why they feel they should leave (i.e., their goals of “X” do not align with the DEI team’s goals of “Y”). In other words, they should share without negatively judging the team or the individuals who will continue to be on the team.
  - iii. Make sure expectations are clear regarding participant contributions to the pursuit of team goals.
  - iv. Provide regular updates regarding progress towards DEI team goals and invite participants to reflect on progress toward their individual goals
  - v. Continually invest in the development and growth of the team members
  - vi. Make sure the team leader is available to and accessible by all team members.
- d. Creating a common understanding of the context, the why
  - e. Creating a common understanding of the work to be done, the purpose
  - f. Regularly reflect on, discuss and affirm a continued common understanding of the work, the context/philosophy, your purpose, your values and commitments to each other both individually and collectively

An important supplement to this document includes the “*Foundations for Your Team*” document.