

It's Time for Companies To 'Walk The Walk' When It Comes To Diversity And Inclusion Training

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The importance of DEIB (diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging) has been brought to the forefront of public conversation in recent years. And the consensus is clear: prioritizing DEIB is a must for every company. The benefits of having a diverse workforce are well-documented, and nearly all organizations (94%) are investing in DEIB.

For most companies, this entails some combination of implementing new policies, mandatory annual training for employees, or maybe even hiring a C-level executive who's responsible for DEIB.

But do these efforts really affect change?

Becoming competent at any life skill takes practice, and DEIB is no different. Without on-going practice, initiatives like yearly trainings or setting diversity goals aren't enough to foster a truly diverse company culture. DEIB is a journey, and while seminars and town halls are a great place to start, more is needed to spark lasting change. Tools like 1:1 coaching can help employees immensely on this individual journey of self-discovery. It's this ongoing, personalized support that takes DEIB from a concept in the back of someone's mind to an embodied practice that informs their decisions and thought processes.

Organizations can make a profound impact on company culture and employees' lives by going the extra step and providing 1:1 coaching. Here's why.

The one-size-fits all approach isn't enough.

At its core, DEIB is all about providing a platform for differing human stories and perspectives. It's so much more than hitting a quota or saying how much you value diversity — it's about making people feel included, welcomed and heard.

People's experiences and circumstances vary widely, so how can we expect a one-size-fits all approach to DEIB to speak to everyone? Companies are making big investments in DEIB, and offering personalized support can maximize the return on these investments by helping employees integrate what they've learned in the way that makes the most sense for them. It's this impact at the individual level which then moves the needle at a corporate level.

1:1 coaching holds employees accountable and encourages them to be present in their learning. It creates a safe space for them to hear about different perspectives, get curious, ask questions, implement changes, and receive feedback. Getting individualized support like this on an ongoing basis is the catalyst for real change over time.

DEIB is for everyone.

It's important to note that DEIB coaching shouldn't be relegated to only the leaders within an organization. Some companies provide their C-suite executives with 1:1 DEIB coaching and expect its effects to trickle down, but it's critical that everyone within an organization has access to this kind of support. This includes people of color who are or aren't part of employee resource groups, members of majority groups who are allies but feel uncomfortable in group settings, and for people who feel like traditional DEIB isn't for them at all.

If companies want to make big strides when it comes to DEIB, they aren't going to accomplish that by only giving a select few individuals access to resources. To create lasting change, companies need to foster a sense of belonging by way of upskilling and reskilling both current and new employees, supporting ERGs, and providing ongoing coaching on topics like inclusive conversations, cultural awareness, allyship, and more. In the past, 1:1 coaching for this might not have been financially or logistically feasible, but technology has made it not only possible, but convenient.

The human element matters.

Nobody is perfect: mistakes can and will happen throughout the DEIB journey. Employees need a safe, non-judgmental space to explore what happens when issues arise. 1:1 coaching can help employees reflect on and learn from their mistakes so that they can do better in the future.

The value of having a person in your corner to help work through the rough spots and provide you with feedback and advice in real time cannot be overstated.

The bigger picture.

When it comes down to it, good companies want to empower employees to live their best lives. Recently, there's been an emphasis on the importance of work-life integration as the overlap between our personal and professional lives grows. 1:1 DEIB coaching doesn't only impact one's work life — it's a critical resource that enriches people's personal lives as well.

Offering 1:1 coaching honors employees as individuals who are at different places in their respective journeys. Businesses who invest in improving employees' lives both inside and outside of work have a much easier time attracting and retaining top talent — a true win-win.

If companies want to create a culture that embodies the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, 1:1 coaching is a powerful tool that takes existing DEIB initiatives to the next level. By providing a personalized solution that holds employees accountable and helps them feel valued, seen, and ultimately grow, companies can start to "walk the walk" when it comes to DEIB.