Creating Diverse and Inclusive Work Cultures:
10 Ways You can Support Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

To create a truly diverse, equitable and inclusive organization takes the engagement and active participation of everyone. An important first step is to deepen your understanding of some basic concepts and to invest some time in building your own Diversity, Equity and Inclusion skill and competency. Beyond building that comepetency, you can take some steps to further DEI in your own workplace. Remember it is important to commit to the process, value the thoughts and ideas of everyone, and celebrate along the way.

1. Know the diversity goals and vision of your organization and its connection to the overall business objectives. Commit to the process by understanding how diversity impacts your role, and how your role impacts the success of the diversity strategy.

2. Participate in employee engagement surveys and respond as openly and honestly as possible. Finding an internal champion with whom you can comfortably express concerns and/or elicit advice can be instrumental in supporting your efforts.

3. Actively engage in the DEI effort. You can take part in or start an Employee Resource Group, or volunteer to chair or serve on committees that organize diversity-related events and activities. Consider becoming a mentor, mentee, or part of a co-mentoring relationship. These activities require a commitment of time, but represent a valuable opportunity for you to support someone else while investing in your own personal and professional development.

4. Build your cultural competence. Cultural competence is not about knowing everything there is to know about every culture. It's about being curious, expanding your horizons and understanding that we need to be respectful and flexible in the way we interact with others. Take the time to learn about different cultures, races, religions and backgrounds represented by your colleagues. Ask your coworkers to share some of the customs and practices associated with their cultures. Become familiar with diversity-related terms and, if you make a mistake, apologize and ask for help.

5. Treat your coworkers with dignity and respect. Be kind supportive and make an effort to include others in professional and/or social gaterhings. Do not tell offensive jokes that

may alienate those who are different from you -- even if they are not present at the time. Most importantly, be respectful always. Diversity exists everywhere -- not just in the office. Take these diversity principles into your community and your home.

6. Drive positive change in the organization. Be a spokesperson for DEI issues that are not necessarily your own. Any organization will find it difficult to ignore the powerful voice created when groups representing different diversity dimensions unite.

7. Welcome ideas that are differrnt from your own, and support fellow teammates. The creativity that comes with diversity can help you generate new ideas or improve a process already in place. It can also make work more interesting, engaging, and fun.

8. Understand the diversity elements you personally bring to the organization. Diversity comes not only in the form of culture, race, and gender but also includes elements such as socio-economic background, education level, geographic location, sexual orientation, thought, and many others. Each of us brings to the table a lifetime of experiences and knowledge. Each of us is different and adds value to the organization because of these differences.

9. Commit to continuous improvement. Be willing to learn, accept feedback, and listen to the concerns of those around you. Even the most enlightened individual can find opportunities for growth.

10. Communicate and educate. DEI work is a journey, not a destination. It takes time, patience, and perseverance. Be tolerant of coworkers who do not yet appreciate the value of diversity or who may not always behave respectfully. Often, negative behavior comes from ignorance rather than malice. A willingness to educate can go along way.

DIVERSITY is only the first step…