

Beyond Diversity 2010 INCLUSIVENESS In The Legal Workplace

Inclusiveness 101*

Although the legal profession has worked very hard in recent years to open its long closed doors to diverse populations, the profession's limited focus on diversity without consideration of inclusion has changed the open doors into revolving doors. Many of our workplaces invest in the recruiting and hiring of diverse populations only to see increasing attrition rates within these groups. We need to do more than open the doors to diverse populations; we need to open the doors and ensure that the workplaces are actually welcoming of the different backgrounds and perspectives.

Diversity v. Inclusiveness: What's the Difference?

Many people use the terms "diversity" and "inclusiveness" interchangeably but they have very different meanings. **Diversity** describes "compositional diversity" – the extent to which a legal organization has people from diverse backgrounds and communities working as attorneys and staff. Primary dimensions of diversity include race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender expression. Secondary dimensions of diversity can include lifestyle, communication style, personality type, learning style, economic status, geographic origin, education status, generation, avocation, work experience, world travel experience, political views, philosophical views, parental status, appearance, veteran status, and nationality.

Inclusive organizations not only have a diverse composition, but are also learning-centered organizations that value the perspectives and contributions of all people, and strive to incorporate the needs and viewpoints of diverse communities into all aspects of the organization. Inclusive organizations are, by definition, diverse at all levels. **Inclusion** is the active, intentional, and ongoing engagement with diversity in the organization.

Diversity is about your workforce; inclusiveness is about your workplace. Diversity is about recruiting; inclusiveness is about retention. The legal profession will continue its "revolving door" syndrome until it embraces both diversity and inclusiveness.



What is Inclusive Excellence?

The concept of *inclusive excellence* moves the legal profession away from a simplistic definition of diversity ("the numbers") to a more inclusive, integrated and comprehensive notion of diversity that has the following features:

- Shifts the responsibility for diversity and inclusion to every person in the institution as opposed to one person, committee or department.
- Shifts the organization away from conceptualizing diversity as a numerical representation of diverse attorneys and staff to a vibrant community that embeds diversity throughout the institution in multiple areas including, but not limited to:
 - demographics (numbers)
 - leadership
 - management/ administration
 - communication& marketing
 - institutional advancement and promotion
 - assessment and evaluation
 - compensation
 - policies
 - recruitment and hiring
 - financial resources
 - professional development and training

Why Should my Organization Focus on Inclusion?

Deciding to embark on an inclusiveness effort is a pivotal decision for an organization and it requires the buy-in and participation of everyone in the organization in order to be successful. Legal organizations must develop a shared understanding of the benefits of inclusiveness if they expect attorneys and staff to support an inclusiveness initiative. If you ensure that everyone

understands why the work is important and where it will take them, you will build a shared commitment that can result in deep cultural, behavioral and structural changes for the organization.

Are there Benefits to Inclusiveness?

One of the biggest, yet most unrecognized benefits of inclusiveness to a legal organization is that it represents a comprehensive new approach to a very serious issue that never seems to get resolved, no matter how hard people try and no matter how many “best practices” are implemented. The bottom line is that many legal organizations are “stuck” in an endless diversity cycle where individual programs simply are not working and everyone is frustrated or cynical about achieving real progress. Other benefits include:

- Keeping Clients, Attracting New Clients, Maximizing Profits
- Better Recruiting
- Lower Attrition
- Greater Productivity
- Better Client Services
- Reduced Liability
- Moral/Ethical/Equity

What are the Six Steps to Creating an Inclusive Organization?

STEP 1:	<p><i>Laying the Internal Foundation (RED)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership Creating an Inclusiveness Committee White Male Allies Overcoming Apathy
STEP 2:	<p><i>Creating an External Support System (ORANGE)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External Advisory Board Consultants & Trainers Other Organizational Resources (i.e., Bar Associations, etc.)
STEP 3:	<p><i>Integrating Inclusiveness within Your Organization (BLUE)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examining Your Organizational Culture Building the Case for Inclusiveness Gathering and Analyzing Information Removing Structural Barriers Inclusiveness Training & Diversity Dialogues Ten Ways to Fight Diversity Fatigue
STEP 4:	<p><i>Integrating Inclusiveness into External Relationships & Communication (PURPLE)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web Presence Client Communication & Marketing Recruiting/Hiring Communication & Marketing Strategic Community Involvement
STEP 5:	<p><i>Implementation (GREEN)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating an Inclusiveness Action Plan Enforcing Accountability Measuring Success
STEP 6:	<p><i>Collective Effort & Success: The Inclusiveness Network (YELLOW)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Studies of Legal Organizations Embracing Inclusiveness

Where Can My Organization Learn More?

To learn more about the new inclusiveness manual and its 350+ pages on how to create an inclusive workplace, as well as the case studies and other resources, go to www.legalinclusiveness.org. For more information about Colorado Campaign for Inclusive Excellence, visit www.colegaldiversity.org. For more information about Dr. Arin Reeves and the Athens Group, go to www.athensgroup.net.

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