



Coaching Can Create a Culture of Inclusion in Your Organization

Description

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The call for change voiced by the Black Lives Matter movement has struck a chord with many of us. It serves not only as a harsh reminder of what has gone wrong but also as a promise that change is possible. The protests show the growing breadth of support to eliminate discrimination and division and to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Embracing a Coaching Culture Isn't Enough

With this in mind, many organizations may currently be looking at what they can do better to remove forms of discrimination and division in the workplace. If you focus the microscope on your organization, are you comfortable with the results?

Is training the sole solution?

You may feel the conversation around diversity could be moved up your agenda by increasing training provision. But is that enough?

According to a recent survey in [Training Industry Magazine](#), unconscious bias training is often the go-to solution for DEI. Companies in the US spend an estimated \$8 billion each year for leaders and high-potential employees to reveal unconscious biases and subtle discriminatory behaviors.

By and large, however, these types of initiatives have not led to long-term results. As my colleague, Simon Taylor, recently wrote, we've all been in workshops where we felt we learned something new, had our existing ways of doing things challenged, and left motivated to do things differently. But, these good intentions often fail to translate into sustained behavioral change back in the workplace.

If we are to create a true culture of inclusion, employees at all levels must understand how it factors into their work, decision making, problem-solving, business opportunities, and business growth.

Can coaching help?

All of us working in learning and development know how powerful coaching can be in effecting change—in people and in organizations. But it will only support a culture of DEI in the workplace if we use it in the right way.

For leaders and managers, the role of a coach is to create a safe environment and enable open and honest conversations around learning, challenges, biases, and preferences. While we need to continue to support our senior leaders, we also need to find ways to provide that same personal coaching support to those who may need it now more than ever before—those who find themselves challenged on a daily basis, feeling they are overlooked or unheard.

Democratizing Coaching by Using the Right Coaches

If you are looking to build a true culture of inclusion in your organization, then you should be looking at coaching beyond your leaders and managers. We need to empower everyone in our organizations, from new employees to senior leaders, to become experts in their own lives and experiences.

Now, more than ever before, it's apparent that underrepresented employees often experience unique challenges in the workplace. In addition to managing everyday organizational stresses, they may face challenges relating to trust, inclusion, and job satisfaction. These can have a negative effect on their emotional well being and also put them at risk of becoming disengaged or even deciding to leave an organization.

Coaching can address and mitigate such challenges but only if you engage the right coaches. The demographic of many businesses' senior leadership is all too often mirrored by their coaches.

If you really want to maximize the opportunities that coaching can bring, then you need to look at the demographic of your coaches and make sure you engage coaches who understand the unique challenges and experiences your employees may face.

We'd even go so far as to advocate giving your employees the chance to select a coach—one whom they feel is best placed to understand their personal and professional challenges. After all, what better way to build trust and confidence in the coaching relationship than to work alongside someone who you feel has "walked in your shoes?"

I've spoken with hundreds of coaches across the globe, fitting in multiple conversations with folks in the US, Europe, Asia, and all other time zones in between.

Since then, we have engaged a carefully selected team of extraordinary, accredited performance coaches in 24 countries to support this thinking. We believe it's not just about who receives coaching;

it's also, crucially, about the coaches themselves.

If we are to truly engage all parts of our communities and organizations, we need to empower everyone to maximize their personal and professional potential. The most powerful and personally transformative experience to support this is coaching.

Ready to see how you can meet your organization's learning and development needs? [Learn more](#) about the unique digital learning environment of [Kaplan Performance Academy](#).

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