

# **Introducing the Employer Demand Toolkit: Inclusive Culture and the Workplace**

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**Burton Blatt Institute**  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

# Objectives

- Comprehend the benefits and essential elements of an Inclusive Workplace Culture
- Understand the role and impact of managers in promoting an Inclusive Workplace Culture
- Identify effective practices for using diversity and accommodation policies to support an Inclusive Workplace Culture

# What is an inclusive culture?

- *It is part of the fabric of the organization:* Organization has evolved well beyond basic compliance or token representation. Observable in...
  - how diversity is actively cultivated by the organization without imposing on the overall employment experience
  - articulated core values of representation, receptivity/flexibility, fairness
  - how the organization embodies those values in all transactions, attitudes, how it does business
    - Both internally and externally; the workforce resembles the characteristics of its customers

# What is an inclusive culture?

- *Everyone gets it*: Everyone understands/internalizes the benefits and how it contributes to the company's health, productivity, profitability...
  - leaders are receptive and responsive; their stance extends to everyone; they model the core values and champion the effort
  - because *workers* feel valued they have higher job satisfaction, commitment, productivity, loyalty and even support diversity measures that may not impact them personally
  - *leaders and workers* have strong relationships with each other
  - *Customers* have greater satisfaction and/or brand loyalty because they see a company with an inclusive culture or are end-users of the company's disability-friendly product or service



# What is an inclusive culture?

- *Everyone practices it*: Integral to infrastructure and operations (workplace design, recruitment/training/advancement, accommodation). Policy, standards, communications, etc. – training, mentoring; measurement (performance evaluations, mystery shoppers, etc.).

# What are the benefits of an inclusive culture?

- Overall healthy, functional and productive organizational environment
  - Overlooked and undervalued talent pool
  - Efficiencies – creative ways to address unmet needs by bundling tasks that make sense for the employer and the worker
  - Workers with disabilities have higher job satisfaction, commitment, productivity and loyalty
  - Addressing needs of those with non-visible and/or undisclosed disabilities
  - Overall employee satisfaction and productivity due to employer responsiveness
  - Reduced turnover & related costs
  - Incidental bonus incentives- tax credits, special programs (e.g., right now-veterans)
  - Measurable impact on customer satisfaction & brand loyalty
  - Better supplier relationships
  - Strong relationship between valued/satisfied workers, customers and suppliers, and the company's bottom line

# What are the benefits of an inclusive culture?

- The main benefit is that it is a win-win for workers with and without disabilities, employers, customers, suppliers:
  - Reduced expenses corresponding to reduced turn-over
  - Increased worker commitment to and identification with organizational success
  - Improved employee health and well-being
  - Improved productivity
  - Increased employee investment in work performance
  - Reduced perception of discrimination and inequity
  - Improved cooperation/collaboration among co-workers, and between employees and management
  - Improved product quality and broader product appeal
  - Improved supplier relations
  - Marketplace and public

# What are the key elements of an inclusive culture?

- Role of management and diversity behaviors
  - All employees have stronger relationships with management- including training for management, knowing policies and understanding how to carry them out



# What are the key elements of an inclusive culture?

- Multiple strategies
  - Examples include mystery shoppers, peer support, & affinity groups
  - Social networking, peer mentoring, support
  - Endorsed/enabled/encouraged by management- give legitimacy (e.g., assigning high level people to lead them, allow work time, provide modest funding)
  - Signals to all workers that people with disabilities are an established, supported part of the work environment

# What are the key elements of an inclusive culture?

- Recruitment and hiring
  - General accessibility
  - Targeted- attracting the cream of the crop talent
  - Customizing to maximize fit between worker and job

# What are the key elements of an inclusive culture?

- Universal design- ideally negates need for disability- specific workplace accommodations/programs
  - Physical space accommodates all needs- workspaces, automatic doors, ramps, etc.
  - Disability is part of diversity plan
  - Written materials, communications, training & other events, etc., routinely offered in multiple accessible formats
  - Flexible scheduling and work options- most workplaces flex their schedules and accommodate workers to fit their home and life needs to a certain extent, some organizations formalize it- e.g. Deloitte, with their career lattice approach to “customized careers” – exactly the same principles – even language – as are used in best practices for placing people with disabilities in competitive jobs.  
[http://www.deloitte.com/view/en\\_US/us/Insights/Browse-by-Content-Type/deloitte-review/35912ee3fad33210VgnVCM100000ba42f00aRCRD.htm](http://www.deloitte.com/view/en_US/us/Insights/Browse-by-Content-Type/deloitte-review/35912ee3fad33210VgnVCM100000ba42f00aRCRD.htm)

# What are the key elements of an inclusive culture?

- Accommodation policies and practices
  - Strategic
  - Procedural justice- *perceived* to be fair
  - Interactional justice- *experienced* as being fair
  - Financing
  - Tracking



# What are strong indicators of an inclusive workplace culture?

- Leadership has to be a strong voice in helping communicate the importance of an inclusive culture
  - Diversity statements- include groups
    - Consistent communication from leadership that it is important
  - Processes that reflect structures for support and flexibility (e.g., policies related to workplace flexibility and/or reasonable accommodations)- a universal design approach works best- inclusiveness for all is what matters
  - Outcomes: increased numbers of employees with disabilities and from other diverse backgrounds, good representation of these folks across all levels of the company, positive attitudes of employees that translate into behaviors that benefit the company (e.g., increased sense of inclusiveness and fairness of workplace- procedural justice- they don't have to get what they ask for- they have to feel it was fairly handled as a request, high job satisfaction which translates to greater productivity, less likelihood to leave)

# What roles do management play in facilitating an inclusive culture?

- They are conduits for what a company's culture is for employees- think of all of your key day-to-day interactions
  - This is what leads to the employees' senses of fairness and inclusion in the workplace and what guides their notion of procedural justice

# Why are reasonable accommodation policies important?

- Reasonable accommodation is a term of art related to persons with disabilities in the workplace that flows from rights and responsibilities that we have under the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - We must also take workplace flexibility into consideration when determining reasonable accommodations
- Should have clear policies and procedures in place in the workplace to facilitate the requests- but not serve as barriers. If the system becomes too bureaucratized, it can become difficult again, even though the intent is to smoothly facilitate the process of making and receiving reasonable accommodations (continued on next slide)

# Process of Facilitating Reasonable Accommodations

- Have clear identification of point people for regular requests and if needed, higher level executives who routinely handle complicated requests
- Make the process interactive
- Have centralized funding sources
- Track accommodations over the long-term
- Maintain confidentiality



# Similarities and Differences Between Diversity and Accommodations Policies

- A key to organizations is that they have to choose to lead inclusively and then they have to view employee participation as a necessary part of creating their policies
- The two are much more alike than they are different because they pertain to everyone in an organization

# What makes for an effective accommodations policy?

- Policies are written in partnership and through the lens of people who work within your company
- Managers and supervisors need to be trained
  - Need to know how to recognize and respond to accommodations requests
- Middle management needs to get trained similarly to managers and supervisors
- Process for determining what is effective and what is not effective
- Monitoring and updating situations in the workplace
- Visit [www.askjan.org](http://www.askjan.org)
  - Job Accommodation Network

# Contact Information

- William Myhill, M. Ed, J.D.
  - [wmyhill@syr.edu](mailto:wmyhill@syr.edu)
- Deborah Greene, M.A.
  - [dlgreene@law.syr.edu](mailto:dlgreene@law.syr.edu)
- Meera Adya, J.D., Ph. D.
  - [madya@syr.edu](mailto:madya@syr.edu)
- Jill Houghton
  - [jbhought@law.syr.edu](mailto:jbhought@law.syr.edu)