Creating the "Stick": How to Build a Year-Long Diversity and Inclusion Sustainability Program

This podcast covers:

1. WHY the diversity and inclusion needle hasn't moved much since the 1980s

2. WHY it is important to put a priority on inclusion

3. WHY it is hard to break through our biases

4. HOW to create new habits of inclusion through year-long micro-learning methods designed to build NEW inclusion habits through repeated activities, gamification and practice.

A word about the title "Creating the Stick" or: "Stickability."

Charles Duhigg (DO-higg) has a few words to say about stickiness in his book "The Power of Habit".

> He says "there is evidence that a preference for things that sound familiar is a product of our neurology. Scientists have examined people's brains as they listen to music and have tracked which neural regions are involved in comprehending aural stimuli. Listening to music activates numerous areas of the brain including the auditory cortex, the thalamus and the superior parietal cortex. These same areas are also associated with pattern recognition and helping the brain decide which inputs to pay attention to and which to ignore. … Without our brain's ability to focus on some sounds and ignore others, everything we hear would be a cacophony of noise. Listening habits allow us to unconsciously separate important noises from those that can be ignore. That's why some songs sound "familiar" – even if you've never heard them before – they are sticky."[i]

#1 WHY the diversity and inclusion needle hasn't moved much since the 1980s

- In 1976, Hall developed the **iceberg analogy** of culture. If the culture of a society was the **iceberg**, Hall reasoned, than there are some aspects visible, above the water, but there is a larger portion hidden beneath the surface.[ii] The famous cultural iceberg is still being "introduced" in today's D&I sessions.

- Schlossberg's model of life transitions, which includes the concepts of mattering and marginality was developed in 1987.[iii] Mattering and marginalizing D&I activities date back to this time and are also still being used.

- Multiple Dimensions of Diversity – an egg-shaped graphic with primary and secondary identity towards the center and organizational and cultural identities on the outer rings was created in 1991[iv]. This too, is still widely used.

- EEOC began enforcing the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1992. In 1992 - race was 41% of EEOC cases and it was 34% in 1996. Sex discrimination was 30% in 1992 and 31% in 1996. Disability was 1% in 1992 and 23% in 1996. [v]

- More recently, in 2018, race accounted for 32% of the discrimination cases, sex 32% and disability 32%. In 2018 there were 76,418 cases filed- almost the same number of cases as in 1999. [vi]

"In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Morgan Stanley shelled out $54 million—and Smith Barney and Merrill Lynch more than $100 million each—to settle sex discrimination claims. In 2007, Morgan was back at the table, facing a new class action, which cost the company $46 million. In 2013, Bank of America Merrill Lynch settled a race discrimination suit for $160 million. Cases like these brought Merrill's total 15-year payout to nearly half a billion dollars."[vii]

So, beginning in the 1980s, companies started pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars of consultant dollars plus internal time and resources – and yet many of these same organizations have struggled to move the needle.

In an article from the Harvard Business Review, managers said that when diversity training was mandatory, it is often met with confrontation and even anger. Some, in fact, reported an increase in animosity toward a minority group. On the other hand, when workers see the training as voluntary, the result is improved attitudes and an increase of 9-13% in the hiring of minorities five years from the training.[viii]

One research paper from Work, Employment and Society in the UK is titled "Pointless Diversity Training: Unconscious Bias, New Racism and Agency." [ix]

In it, the author states:

> "The latest fashion of 'unconscious bias training' is a diversity intervention based on **unproven** suppositions and is **unlikely** to help eliminate racism in the workplace. Knowing about bias does not automatically result in changes in behaviour by managers and employees…While the intention of addressing bias is laudable, the awareness training that typically accompanies these initiatives makes a series of assumptions about bias and pro-diversity action that can be challenged from a critical diversity perspective."

The failure to recognize that Unconscious Bias Training is likely to be least effective for those whose actions most need modification is due to the inadequate treatment of assistance and responsibility. Part of the allure of the notion of unconscious bias is that it is not about blame. It's convenient to believe that "gee - racial discrimination is not a product of my conscious thought but deeply embedded, so discrimination isn't really my fault."

The author concludes by saying,

> "By adopting Unconscious Bias Training, senior managers can demonstrate that their organization is taking action to tackle the problem of racial bias… but it is yet another distraction from the embedded, structural disadvantages within organizations; disadvantages that require far more radical solutions than introspective sessions that simply nudge managers and employees, often begrudgingly, into recognizing that they are biased."

An article from the Australian Journal of Public Administration reaches similar conclusions, although it addresses gender rather than race. [x]

> The article, titled "Unconscious Bias Training: The 'Silver Bullet' for Gender Equity?" states that *"practices that go beyond training are necessary. Unconscious bias training needs to be incorporated in broader workplace interventions that are ongoing, staged, iterative, multi-level, and collective."*

Sara Taylor of DeepSEE Consulting is a frequent presenter, coach and exhibitor at the Multicultural Forum. She has a strongly wording podcast titled "Dispelling False Perceptions about Diversity Training." [xi]

#2 - WHY it is important to put a priority on inclusion

Harvard Business Review has a 5-part series about "Advancing Black Leaders" In it, they refer to today's status quo at many companies as giving "the illusion of inclusion". [xii]

> *"Senior leaders — most of whom are white men — must set the tone. Why? In one survey, nearly 40% of black employees said they feel it is never acceptable to speak out about experiences of bias — a silence that can become corrosive. Another study showed that among black professionals who aspire to senior leadership positions, the most frequently adopted strategy is to avoid talking about race or other issues of inequality, for fear of being labeled an agitator. Other research has indicated that the only CEOs and lower-level managers **not** penalized for championing diversity are white men.*
>
> *To create a culture of psychological safety and pave the way for open communication will require a top-down directive and modeling through informal and formal discussions in which people are asked to share ideas, ask questions, and address issues without fear of reprisal."*

Deloitte has an inclusion model with four stages:

1. fairness and respect
2. valued and belonging
3. safe and open
4. empowered and growing. [xiii]

Spectra Diversity has a five-stage maturity model:

1. Avoid
2. Comply
3. Adopt
4. Integrate
5. Transform

Most organizations Spectra has assessed are in the "ADOPT" phase which is defined as one which:

> *Views diversity and inclusion as a key driver of organizational efficiency, employee engagement and/or opportunities to expand market opportunities. Measurements are in place to evaluate diversity and inclusion initiatives. There is some infrastructure (e.g.*

diversity and inclusion council, employee resource groups, etc.). Diversity and inclusion are aligned with the organization's mission and vision. The organization works to

#3 - WHY it is hard to break through our implicit biases

However, a recent meta-analysis of over 40 years of diversity training evaluations showed that diversity training can work, especially when it targets awareness and skill development and occurs over a significant period of time.[xiv] The key ingredient is "time".

#4 - HOW to create new habits of inclusion through year-long micro-learning methods designed to build NEW inclusion habits through repeated activities, gamification and practice.

How can D&I programs be improved? By tackling shortcomings one by one. There are several steps organizations can take. Some of these may be out of your control as an individual, although it is good to know what they are, so you can be an advocate for change.

1. Give D&I sustained C-suite support and recognize and reward the people who contribute to its initiatives — for example, your chief diversity officer could report directly to the CEO and tracking inclusion initiative participation in performance reviews and promotion and pay raise discussions.

2. Challenge those running D&I efforts to set clear goals for how representation, organizational networks, and access to resources should change across functions and levels over time and how black employees' perceptions, engagement, and well-being should improve, and then measure the efforts' effectiveness with data analysis and qualitative surveys. [Spectra Diversity, has a diversity and inclusion assessment which measures both the individual and the organization. It is the only assessment which measures both.][xv]

3. Shift from preventative or reactive measures, such as antibias training, to proactive ones, such as upping the number of black candidates considered for open positions and stretch roles.

4. Abandon one-size-fits-all and color-blind leadership-development practices in favor of courses and coaching tailored to specific groups — or better yet, adopt personalized plans that recognize the multifaceted nature of each individual. [Spectra Diversity's Enhanced Data Analysis provides targeted D&I information, so organizations know if the issues are limited to just gender for example -or if a lack of inclusion is felt by one or two races/ethnicities, the gay and lesbian population and

the differently abled. Targeted data allows D&I consultants to offer targeted intervention methods.]

5.   Stop asking black employees to blend in; instead, emphasize the value of a workplace that embraces all styles and behaviors. Make it possible for people to bring their authentic and "whole" selves to work. [xvi]

#1 – The Cadillac version

First – the Cadillac version as illustrated by two colleagues: Laura Goodrich and Greg Stiever of GWT Next - Global Workforce Transformation. They've created what they call, Cinematic Microlearning. They propose that cinematic microlearning is key to boosting retention and engaging employees in your training and learning efforts.[xvii]

CINEMATIC: Increase learning engagement through storytelling. Narrative-based filmmaking serves as the backbone of our learning programs, which has been proven boost information retention.

MICROLEARNING: Learn faster, learn better. Microlearning is a technique of delivering educational video content in small, short, and specific bursts.

ROADMAP: A guide for the human interaction side of the equation. It includes coaching conversations, collaboration with teams and the sharing of ambassador stories.

GWT Next's cinematic microlearning includes:

- Email delivery of modules spaced over time
- 3-5-minute videos
- An assessment tool
- Self-reflection questions
- A way for participants (collaborative opportunity to review together with managers) to review the work
- Ways to connect with a leader and engage during the 1:1s; coaching conversations are an integral part of their cinematic microlearning
- Progress tracking… leaders need to have one coaching conversation per month; if org is already doing 1:1s it works MUCH better
- Collaboration (in teams and across teams)

#2 – The Subaru Outback Version.

This is the version that we are undertaking at Spectra Diversity. We accept the data showing that a number of companies have gotten consistently positive results with tactics that don't focus on control of employees and instead apply three basic principles:

- **engage managers in solving the problem**: When managers actively help boost diversity in their companies, something amazing happens - they begin to think of themselves as diversity champions. The hard part is getting them to engage when many already feel overwhelmed. Spectra Diversity has a plan for that.
- **expose them to people from different groups**: At firms that create self-managed work teams, the share of white women, black men and women, and Asian-American women in management rises by 3% to 6% over five years. Self-managed teams and cross-training have had more positive effects than mandatory diversity training, performance evaluations, job testing, or grievance procedures, which are supposed to promote diversity.
- **encourage social accountability for change**: On average, companies that put in diversity task forces see 9% to 30% increases in the representation of white women and of each minority group in management over the next five years. Once it is clear that top managers are watching, women start to get more premier assignments.[xviii]

The diversity and inclusion sustainment program we are building at Spectra Diversity focuses on two keystone activities:

- Listening
- Communication

Course outline

We're creating four modules per month for one year. This is 48 modules of three minutes on average. The course includes:

- repetition and reinforcement of learning from the D&I session included in our Facilitation Kit
- gamification – activities that we hope will be fun
- use of the sandwich method in which a new topic or difficult topic is presented between two known or familiar ideas (microaggression example)

- accountability and involvement of middle managers or supervisors in a coaching role (there is a coaching guide to support that work)

- self-pacing – the emails come out weekly and the activities must be completed in order, but the pace is self-directed

- short video components (like Laura and Greg) moderator introductions or instructions; YouTube videos; expert testimonials or key messages from our Change Partners

- team interaction – some of the activities are with colleagues or teams

#3 – the YUGO version

You may already be thinking about content you could repurpose and redistribute for sustainability. It can be simple. The key is twofold – SUSTAINED and ACCOUNTABILITY. Here's a few examples of what you can do:

- Weekly emails with existing content in bite sized pieces: Use PowerPoint and record your voice to illustrate a point [I use SnagIt for recording. It's free and easy to use.]
- Go record SMEs on a smart phone. These would be a selection of diverse people answering a single question. Perhaps "when was the earliest time you remember being different in some way." Release one or two of these per month.
- Play a card game. I recommend "Story Stitch" by Green Card voices. It takes about one hour to play so it could be a lunch and learn. It can be played multiple times with different people. A pair of trained facilitators is recommended – I've been trained and so have many others. Contact Green Card Voices for more information.
- Buy each team member a nice journal (like a Moleskin) and assign self-reflection questions for each week. At the end of the month the journal is reviewed with manager in a 1:1. The reason for a journal rather than typing on a document is because of the connections formed in the brain when you write something down. It makes the learning "sticky".

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Resources below:

[i] **The Power of Habit: Why we do what we do in life and in business" Charles Duhigg, 2014, Random House Trade Paperback**

[ii] https://www.spps.org/cms/lib/MN01910242/Centricity/Domain/125/iceberg_model_3.pdf

[iii] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/262343576_Marginality_and_mattering_Urban_Latino_male_undergraduates_in_higher_education

[iv] "Workforce America!", Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener, Business One Irwin 1991; adapted in "Diverse Teams at Work", Loden, Gardenschwarts and Rowe, Business One Irwin 1994

[v] https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/charges-a.cfm

[vi] https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/charges.cfm

[vii] https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail

[viii] https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2017/12/04/building-a-diverse-workforce-in-a-small-business/#429a97ab4250

[ix] "Pointless Diversity Training: Unconscious Bias, New Racism and Agency," Mike Noon, Queen Mary University of London, UK, Work, Employment and Society 2018, Vol. 32(1) 198–209, DOI: 10.1177/0950017017719841; journals.sagepub.com/home/wes

[x] "Unconscious Bias Training: The 'Silver Bullet' for Gender Equity?", Sue Williamson and Meraiah Foley, University of New South Wales, Canberra, Australian Journal of Public Administration, vol. 77, no. 3, pp. 355–359, doi:10.1111/1467-8500.12313

[xi] https://whatsthedifferencepodcast.com/podcasts/solocast-3/

[xii] https://hbr.org/cover-story/2019/11/toward-a-racially-just-workplace

[xiii] **Deloitte Review, "The diversity and inclusion revolution: Eight powerful truths," Juliet Bourke, Bernadette Dillon, Issue 22, Jan. 2018**

[xiv] https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2016-43598-001

[xv] https://www.spectradiversity.com/products/diversity-and-inclusion-tool/

[xvi] https://hbr.org/cover-story/2019/11/toward-a-racially-just-workplace

[xvii] **Laura Goodrich and Greg Stiever, https://www.gwtnext.com/cinematic-microlearning-1**

[xviii] https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-diversity-programs-fail