5 Strategies for Conducting Inclusive Meetings

01
ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY

consider the needs of all employees, including those with intellectual or developmental disabilities

02
ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION

motivating staff to collaborate on ideas and projects promotes inclusion and creates space for diverse thought and perspectives

03
MANAGE THE CONVERSATION

advocate for equitable contributions, understanding that women and racial minority groups are disproportionately interrupted and undervalued in the workplace

04
ENSURE PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

create environments where workers feel safe to express their identities and their ideas without the fear of retribution or marginalization

05
CREDIT THE SOURCE

acknowledge and properly credit employees for innovative ideas, especially if the contribution will be implemented into business operations

5 Strategies for Conducting Inclusive Meetings

Diversity and inclusion (D&I) extends beyond race and gender, especially considering that 30% of white-collar workers in the U.S. have a disability. Managers must promote neurodiversity and plan meetings accordingly. Consider the following options:
- Provide real-time closed caption options
- Collaborate with staff to determine best time/location/format for the meeting
- Audio record or transcribe detailed meeting minutes
- Create accessible materials

Inclusion in the workplace is beneficial because it allows organizations to tap into their employee resources. Collaboration requires employees to see each other fully, recognize the importance of their differences and apply their unique perspectives to business operations. Without collaboration, fewer perspectives are heard and employees begin to feel isolated in the workplace. Separate teams into small groups or partners that they wouldn't normally interact with to foster effective collaboration.

Women, minorities, and other marginalized groups report that they are ignored and interrupted at a high rate during meetings. Managers must take ownership of equitable participation in meetings and look out for "conversation dominators". Allow staff room to express their perspective uninterrupted and encourage respect amongst your team. Don't shy away from addressing micro-aggressions and condescending behavior.

Employees feel safe when they are encouraged to fully express themselves in meetings. To foster psychologically safe meetings, consider:
- Preferred pronoun usage
- Train cultural intelligence
- Teach benefits of D&I
- Establish meeting ground rules
- Encourage diverse thought
- Allow staff to respectfully disagree without reproach

The "stolen idea" concept often occurs in the corporate world to the detriment of women, racial minorities, and other marginalized communities. Managers have the power to support marginalized staff and ensure that credit is properly assigned. Consider concluding each meeting with a recap of the discussion, attributing important ideas to their originator. Reflect on your own personal biases to ensure that you are not incorrectly assigning credit to certain groups based on implicit bias.
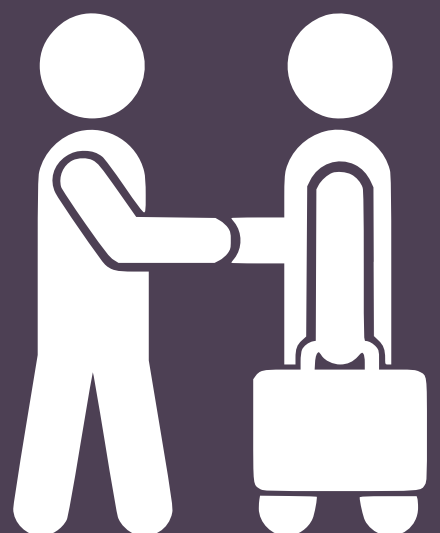
This infographic is based on information found in the following studies:

- Miller-Merrell, J. (2020, June 30). Council post: The nuts and bolts of how to make your workplace meeting accessible. Forbes. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/07/01/the-nuts-and-bolts-of-how-to-make-your-workplace-meeting-accessible/?sh=7c4b494b5e4b

- Williams, J., & Mihaylo, S. (2022, February 11). How the best bosses interrupt bias on their teams. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2019/11/how-the-best-bosses-interrupt-bias-on-their-teams

- How to lead inclusive meetings. Development Guild DDI. (2022, March 30). Retrieved May 15, 2022, from https://www.developmentguild.com/dei/how-to-lead-inclusive-meetings/

- Shirzadi, A. (2018). Dissecting THE SCIENCE OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION. Education Forum, 45(1), 32–35.

- Valentic, S. (2021). Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as a Business Strategy. Waste360, N.PAG.

- Wang, F., & Shi, W. (2021). Inclusive Leadership and Pro-Social Rule Breaking: The Role of Psychological Safety, Leadership Identification and Leader-Member Exchange. Psychological Reports, 124(5), 2155–2179.

- Bergman, C., Dellve, L., & Skagert, K. (2016). Exploring communication processes in workplace meetings: A mixed methods study in a Swedish healthcare organization. Work, 54(3), 533–541.

- Mroz, J. E., Yoerger, M., & Allen, J. A. (2018, January 1). Leadership in Workplace Meetings: The Intersection of Leadership Styles and Follower Gender. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 25(3), 309–322.

- Tulshyan, R. (n.d.). Giving credit matters. here's how to give it-and get it. Quartz. Retrieved May 15, 2022, from https://qz.com/work/2138703/giving-credit-matters-heres-how-to-give-it-and-get-it/

- Reza, F. (2021). Module 3: Inequities in the Workplace. In DIV5003 Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace [Class lecture slides]. American College of Education.