

HR Network –Notes from the 2-9-17 Implicit Bias Session

Part 2 of a 2 part series

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First Exercise:

Participants reflected on how the current political moment/ environment is impacting their efforts to advance racial equity, inclusion & diversity in their workplace. Many of the participants in their discussion focused on the immigration ban in particular.

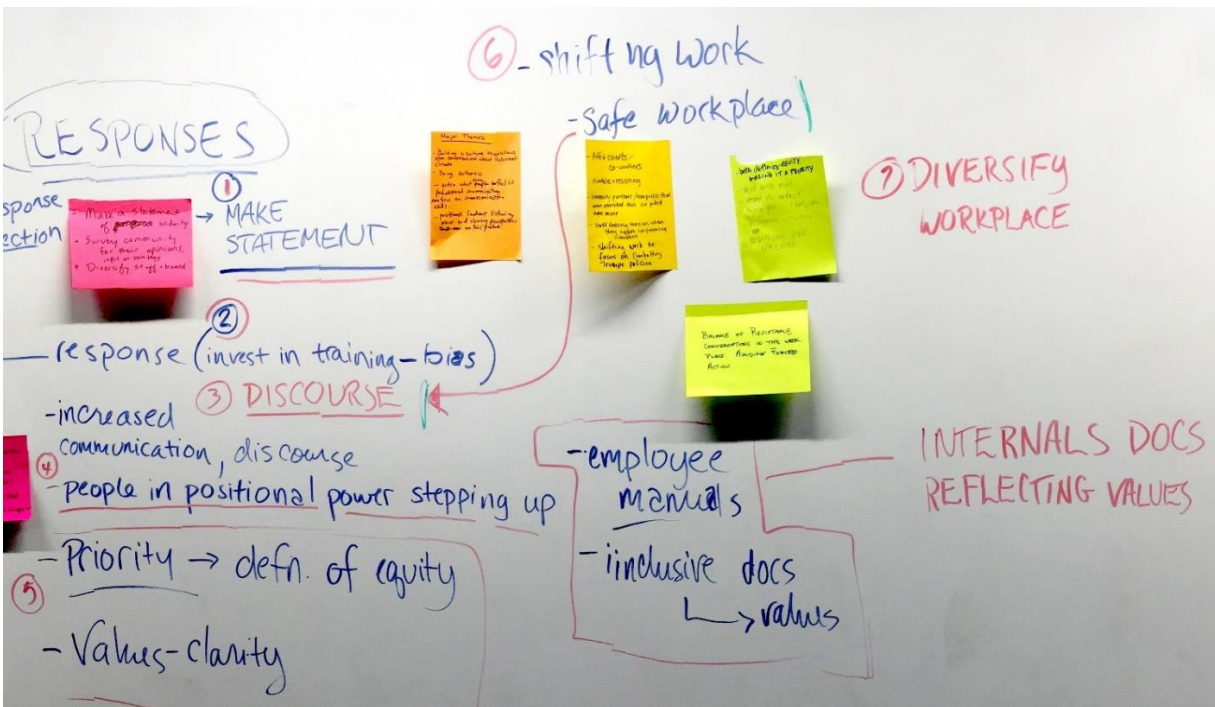
Folk's reactions were grouped into two categories; the impact and their responses.

1) The Impact:

- People have been triggered in so many ways: gender biases, increase of overt racism, White privilege
- Staff are unsettled – anxiety and insecurity showing up
- Somber / depression
- Concerns about future funding
- Desire to support folks who are being targeted / impacted right now
- Some work places talking **a lot** about what's going on – other not talking about it at all
- Trying to figure out what's 'professional communication' in the workplace
- Conflicts between staff that do not share the same values
- Staff with green cards are worried – there's a desire to figure out how employers can help these folks

2) The Responses (some were suggestions for responses, some were actual responses from organizations):

- The Organization can choose to **make a statement**
- Invest in **training opportunities** for staff / structured ways for staff to work on issues of bias
- Make space to connect, communicate and have **discourse** on what is going on
- Folks in **positional power step up** – lead by example, take a stand
- Clarify the organizational values – work on what **equity** means / looks like in your org.
- Shift how people work – **creating a safe workplace** - have employee manuals and practices reflect the organizational values
- Figure out how employers can help the folks worried about immigration consequences



Second Exercise:

We discussed some of the strategies that folks are currently taking on in their workplaces that are responsive to this political moment, that are helping to support the values of racial equity, inclusion & diversity.

- 1) Updating compensation and benefits practices
 - Applying an equity lens to their practices
 - Dealing with real resources - \$\$
- 2) Using Strength Finder (or other similar tools)
 - Using this as a way to fully “see” employees and acknowledge that folks can bring strengths to the work that are outside of the contributions they are in their day to day job duties
 - Making sure that tools like this are a regular part of structures and discussion so that the framing is truly integrated in how they are working
- 3) Staying informed
 - Gathering information about what is going on and resources available on
 - communicating regularly with staff
 - Knowledge is power!
- 4) Ensuring care systems are in place for staff
 - Looking at what you can do to support work / life balance
 - What is in place to help staff reduce stress?
 - Looking at the work environment – more art work
- 5) Looking at different way that folks engage and acknowledge varying comfort levels

- Are you looking to P.O.C. staff to lead internal efforts and discussions?
 - Being mindful that you are not asking P.O.C. to do an un fair amount of the heavy lifting
 - Being mindful that P.O.C. voices are being heard and valued
- Taking steps to build trust levels and genuine connection
- Consider bringing in support from outside the organization to support and facilitate

Third Exercise:

Brainstorming strategies for how address implicit bias in your work place. Taking a closer look at two areas that were part of the December webinar: 1) Monitoring demographics and equity and 2) Supporting staff in raising concerns collectively and promote open, productive communication.

1. Monitoring demographics and equity

Tracking organizational patterns. Who is hired, promoted, leads, has agency, decision making authority?

- Survey staff to learn what is most important to folks
 - How are they experiencing being employees at the organization?
 - Arrange the survey so that you can review the data based on relevant sub-groupings
 - share info back
- Be prepared to take action in response to the information gathered
 - Take a deeper look at the structural implications
 - Map out steps that address structural issues that are leading to inequity
 - Acknowledge the findings
 - Do not hide from them
 - Be willing to deal with them
- Consider engaging the Board
 - A high level commitment to the this work is important
 - Needs to “be in the DNA” of the organization – supported at all levels
- Be intentional about your approach to developing leadership in your organization
 - How are your recruiting new employees?
 - How are you developing the folks you have on staff?
 - How do folks get access to different types of work and opportunities?

2. Supporting staff in raising concerns collectively and promote open productive communication

- Consider establishing safe spaces / groups
 - Identity specific spaces – such as People of Color (mindful that there are a wide range of experiences and points of view within POC) and white identity caucuses
 - Need to be mindful of what is right for your org
 - Think about if and when identity groups come together - how are they connected?
- Trust can develop when employees see and experience action (ie – actions can be more meaningful than words.... although words are important too 😊)

- Acknowledge that post-election everyone is feeling a different relationship to power w/ political movement
- Identify where and how folks who do not hold traditional leadership positions have the opportunity to lead
- Develop tools / ways for different folks on staff to step up and steps back – how can you institutionalize these practices?
- Think about meeting dynamics looking for ways that voices that are not typically heard can be heard – i.e. building in self-reflection time – small group or one on one discussion time – acknowledging that not everyone engages in the same way and / or feels comfortable in the same situations
- Focus of the abilities and strengths that people bring to their work – find ways to really see people for who they are
 - Create intentional spaces to come together
 - Opt-in
 - Tools like Meyers Briggs or strengths finder can be an entry point

Resources:

National Immigration Law Center

<https://www.nilc.org/get-involved/community-education-resources/know-your-rights/>

American Civil Liberties Union:

<https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/what-do-if-immigration-agents-ice-are-your-door>

National Employment Law Project:

<http://www.nelp.org/>

SF Human Rights Commission:

<http://sf-hrc.org/>

Equal Justice Society:

<https://equaljusticesociety.org/>

Race Forward:

www.raceforward.org

Perception Institute:

<https://perception.org/>

Racial, gender wages gap persist in U.S. despite some progress, Patten, Pew Research Center

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/07/01/racial-gender-wage-gaps-persist-in-u-s-despite-some-progress/>

The Paradox of Diversity in Social Change Organizations – Berthoud and Greene

http://www.berthoudconsulting.com/files/Paradox_Sept_2014.pdf