Diversity and Inclusion

Leveraging Collective Intellectual Capital to Drive Organizational Excellence

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The Purpose

Diversity programs are becoming much more common in the workplace as agencies strive to understand and address the concerns of people within the organization who feel they are not included (either directly, or via representation from others with whom they identify) in the direction, prevailing culture, and management of the organization. The perception of non-inclusiveness, whether valid or invalid, has a stifling effect on the organization, creating an environment that inhibits people from sharing ideas and opinions that differ from the understood institutional norms. Failing to value and embrace Diversity leads to polarization within the workplace, creating an 'us and them' mindset, which is further exacerbated by personality dynamics and communication styles, often causing significant delays in productivity within the organization.

While Diversity training is important to recognizing our differences, a program that focuses solely on Diversity will not be successful. It is critical to incorporate the concept of Inclusion in any discussion of Diversity to ensure that participants develop a culture of like-mindedness that honors those differences.

The principles of Diversity and Inclusion require that everyone work together to deploy best practices, tools and resources to maximize engagement, advancement, performance and job satisfaction. By fostering an environment that supports the Inclusion of Diversity, leaders empower their personnel to express their own unique voice and exert their influence over the growth of the organization, promoting innovation and employees' connection to the organization's purpose and mission.

For a Diversity and Inclusion program to be effective, it must become a corporate strategy, linked to measurable outcomes which encourage personnel to truly embrace its concepts and place value on its incorporation in their daily lives. In the best Diversity and Inclusion programs, providing training to raise awareness is just the beginning of the process; employees and managers at all levels must understand and own their role in attaining the organization's Diversity and Inclusion goals and work to develop skills that lead to business opportunities and optimized talent.

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The Strategy

To successfully implement a Diversity and Inclusion training program, agencies must first understand the problem that they are solving. Many organizations cite the need to be able to recruit, grow and retain personnel, which, while identifying measurable goals, focuses on only one area of the enterprise – human resources. Diversity and Inclusion are concepts that should and do stretch beyond the realm of human resources. Profitability, innovation and increased engagement with stakeholders, both internal and external, are all areas that can be impacted through successful program implementation.

Embracing Diversity and Inclusion must be an intentional, agency-wide initiative with executive sponsorship and stakeholders who are prepared to invest both time and money. Organizations must commit themselves to making sweeping changes to ensure program success.

The key to achieving program goals is to thoughtfully assess the agency's current state and identify measurable, quantifiable goals to build a successful focus. Potential areas for assessment include:

- o The types of diversities present in the work place
- o Current culture of relationship and openness
- o The value placed on Diversity in the workplace by both employees and leadership
- o Leadership structures including the deciders, influencers, and individuals able to institute cultural change
- o Current obstacles/concerns (i.e. communication styles, HR complaints)

Only through examining the root causes of issues and developing a long-term strategy for driving cultural shift can organizations bring about the change they seek.
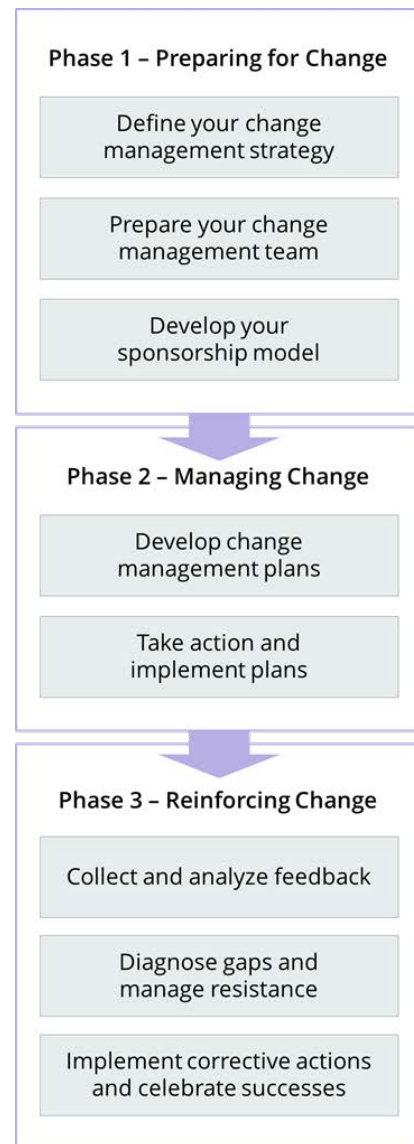

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The Plan

Any change requires a shift in our ways of thinking, being, and doing and is often approached as a challenge that can be overcome through sound Project Management practices and training. This approach is rarely successful; however, because it does not consider the people side of change. To achieve desired outcomes, Diversity and Inclusion programs must also incorporate a comprehensive Change Management strategy. Project Management focuses on the 'technical' aspects of program, while Change Management focuses on the 'people side' of organizational change, involving the perspectives of both the individual and the organization in the development of program goals and benchmarks.

At an organizational level, Change Management is a leadership competency that enables change within the organization and fosters the development of personnel capabilities and effectiveness. On a project level, Change Management is the application of a structured process and tools to lead the people side of change and achieve desired program outcomes. Understanding and effective application of these principles increases the probability of project success, enables proactive management of employee resistance to change, helps capture people-dependent Return on Investment and builds change competency into the organization to support future efforts.

The 3-Phase Change Management Process depicted at right illustrates a phased approach to planning and managing Organizational Change. Each step incorporates structured processes and tools designed to integrate individual and organizational change management, delivering a holistic solution that increases the likelihood of success. In the development and implementation of a Diversity and Inclusion program, these phases often include the following: Organizational Assessment and Gap Analysis, Workforce Training (for both Senior Leadership and Professional Staff), Coaching and Mentoring, Program Evaluations, Communications Planning, Community Engagement and Stakeholder

3-Phase Change Management Process

Phase 1 – Preparing for Change

Define your change management strategy

Prepare your change management team

Develop your sponsorship model

Phase 2 – Managing Change

Develop change management plans

Take action and implement plans

Phase 3 – Reinforcing Change

Collect and analyze feedback

Diagnose gaps and manage resistance

Implement corrective actions and celebrate successes

Relations, and Policy and/or Standard Operating Procedure updates.

By embedding the principles of Change Management into a Diversity and Inclusion program, organizations

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benefit through the definition of a structured management process that is research-based, holistic, easily applied and scalable to meet their evolving needs. In addition, personnel are more likely to actively

participate and embrace the desired change through improved communications of the plan, visible involvement of leadership and reinforcement of change through corrective action and celebration of successes.

The Benefit

If properly employed, Diversity and Inclusion help to build cross-cultural competence: promoting effective interaction amongst working groups; giving personnel the ability to consider other people's world views to solve problems and design better, longer-lasting and more creative solutions; and embedding cross-cultural competency development into performance management systems for measurable, sustainable impact. Leveraging the collective knowledge of a diverse population:

- o Improves decision-making and problem solving through consideration of multiple perspectives
- o Provides better insight into the populations being served
- o Increases the relevancy of messaging to communities of diverse stakeholders

- o Promotes efficiency by leveraging a broader range of skills

Recognizing the potential impact of these outcomes enables organizations to put systems in place to understand and measure the effectiveness of their Diversity and Inclusion programs, turning these efforts into investments rather than expenses. Program goals that tie back to individual and organization performance help to sustain a culture of Diversity and Inclusion and allow agencies to recognize measurable value through this type of organizational change. Diversity and Inclusion should be a corporate strategy for leveraging the collective intellectual capital to drive business growth and organizational excellence.

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About Us

Longevity Consulting, LLC (Longevity) is a CMMI Level 3, ISO 9001:2015 certified, Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB) and Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB). Since 2002, we have partnered with our clients to support their Business Transformation efforts. We look beyond the scope of individual projects and work to understand the needs of the overall organization, including the people, processes and systems, to deliver holistic solutions that help our clients achieve their goals. Throughout each engagement we work together with client stakeholders to identify practical solutions that address immediate problems, while also supporting broader, strategic organizational goals. This enterprise-wide approach to service delivery ensures that every Longevity effort is strategically aligned to the mission, driving process improvement and ultimately providing measurable value that supports organizational change.

Longevity has supported Talent Management programs for numerous federal clients, helping agencies to accurately assess their organization, identify gaps and create roadmaps for successful organizational change. Our services uniquely combine Organizational Strategy, Systems Integration, Change Management and Professional Development training, placing best practices in service to fostering work environments that value employee growth and open communication to enable maximum productivity through integration of HR practices and Talent Management solutions. We work closely with stakeholders to align human capital strategy with mission goals, design comprehensive programs supported by sound Change Management and Communication plans and provide system integration and program management services to ensure successful deployment and measurable outcomes.

Our efforts focus on driving efficiencies that facilitate the management of personnel performance through the elimination of data siloes and manual processes, improving accuracy and consistency and facilitating information sharing across the organization. Longevity helps organizations develop and implement comprehensive Talent Management strategies, designed to meet evolving mission goals and optimize employee performance, through unified people management practices. Our team possesses a deep understanding of the full scope of federal HR processes through which agencies attract, develop, motivate and retain high-performing employees, placing special emphasis on deepening employees' connection to organizational mission and goals by improving their understanding of the value they contribute.

Longevity's personnel possess extensive, successful experience implementing, enhancing and modernizing large-scale human capital management programs. Leveraging tools and techniques like Lean Six Sigma and Continuous Process Improvement, our team has supported the strategic rollout of agency-wide federal human resources systems, from program definition and design, to the development and implementation of change management and communications strategies that ensure successful end-user adoption. Longevity personnel also provide data analysis support, including the creation and administration of post deployment surveys and evaluations, to enable agencies to gauge program effectiveness and better understand and anticipate workforce requirements. Our efforts have enabled organizations to increase employee engagement, job satisfaction and performance and improve organizational effectiveness, innovation and growth.

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