Table 10: Shifting from D&I to DEI & Belonging

Facilitator: Emmanuel Cudjoe*, Yale School of Management*

Scribe: Lauren Massagli*, CASSS*

Key Words: Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion

Table Scope:

While diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives are important, various studies have showed that if employees or members of an organization do not feel a sense of belonging, they tend to disengage and this results in decreased productivity and efficiency. Consequently, belonging is one of the most vital concepts currently being explored in DEI efforts around the country in the push to make our workplaces more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Minority employees have long maintained that simply recruiting diverse talent does not result in diverse organizations, particularly if the attrition rate equals the rate at which new talent is being brought in.

At the roundtable, we will be discussing some of the factors contribute to increased or decreased sense of belonging among employees. Additionally, we will discuss how organizations can ensure that their employees, particularly employees from underrepresented ethnic groups, feel motivated, engaged, and valued at their companies.

Discussion Notes:

- The difference between DI and DEI – The attendees are familiar with DE&I initiatives, but are not deeply familiar with the distinction between the two
    - This can affect the long term implications for employees
- DE&I Hiring practices, and DEI initiatives are at the forefront of some attendees
- It is important to follow through on the label "DE&I"
    - This looks differently at every company
- Inclusion is more widespread than equity
    - Unequal pay
    - Unequal chance to be promoted
    - Not comfortable within the team (belonging)
- Equity goes a step further than DI
- 2020 DE&I efforts attracted a lot of attention worldwide – companies have not kept up with their commitment with DE&I through 2023
- Feeling like you belong is foundational to the employee's success and feeling part of the team
- Retention is low among ethnic minorities yet there are many initiatives to improve diversity
    - What is the problem with high turnover among these groups?
        - Feeling valued and having a sense of belonging
        - Example: hiring women on to a male dominant team – their sense of belonging and value may below due to culture and pay difference
        - Word goes around that "___" organization is not good for diversity therefore it does not attract diverse employees
- What has worked at your organization to make people truly feel like they are part of the team?

- o Diversity workshops have worked well, some are mandated – this can be beneficial because it helps everyone gain a deeper understanding of what DE&I is versus what they perceive it to be
  - ▪ This shapes the company's culture overall

Start the conversation (without forcing it) and change the conversation towards DE&I

What can you do if you do not have leverage within your company?

Make a level playing field rather than enforce or mandate certain quotas

- Try to ask the same or similar questions in the hiring process to level the playing field
- This is the best way to pose a fair question (based on the job)
- Be free with creating interview questions – but ask the same questions to each candidate

Give yourself some grace, try to be mindful and intentional about equity

After hiring a diverse team, how can we ensure these folks feel part of the team?

- Diversify opportunities that appeal to different people: introverted, extroverted, etc. The same goes for race, gender, education & prior employer (large or small).
- This takes intention
- Some companies have a shared spreadsheet that indicates each employee's interest whether it is scientific or otherwise
  - o This allows opportunities to reach a diverse audience
- It's easy to be mindful, it's difficult to *remember* to be mindful
- Some organizations feel divided due to the frequency of interactions
  - o It's all about creating the culture that brings the team together
  - o Engage with those who are not vocal outside of meetings, they want to feel seen and valued – creates a sense of belonging
    - ▪ It is the duty of every member of the team to do this
    - ▪ Start with a small group of members who feel a sense of belonging and grow that
    - ▪ Belonging is best fostered locally, and it has the power to grow from there
- People feel most connected to those that they work closely with
- Could the sense of belonging be driven through scientific knowledge or themes? Finding synergy
  - o One attendee's company implemented this, but it was still a bit divided in terms of inclusion for all because some employees roles are not scientific
- Belonging is a multidimensional destination
  - o People connect on different levels and topics
- How do we make employees feel like they are worth more than the tasks they are completing?
- This is an aspirational goal – we all have a role to play in order to reach our goal