

Book: The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity

Authors: Frederick A. Miller & Judith H. Katz

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Book Review

This book builds upon common knowledge of the value of diversity and mandates a concept referred to as “inclusion”. The book begins by making the case for inclusion and then defines the elements of an “inclusion breakthrough”. The final section describes how to create the inclusion breakthrough. A glossary of relevant terms is also included. The authors, Frederick A. Miller and Judith H. Katz, relate solid examples of their experiences and knowledge gained as President and Executive Vice President of The Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group, Inc.

The authors thoroughly develop the case for inclusion, describing it as far more than a multicultural or diverse workforce. The workforce may be naturally diverse, however the workplace pushes all to conform to the organizational culture. Employees that suppress their differences to “fit in” to the usual workplace culture are not able to fully contribute to organizational objectives. Employers must learn to capitalize on individual differences. Employers must assure that hiring practices that support diversity. Policies and procedures must also support diversity. Incentives and rewards at all levels must also support diversity. A shared understanding throughout an organization is necessary to achieve this mission critical imperative.

An organization must position itself for radical change. The authors mandate support and involvement of senior management. Leaders must be educated, truly understand the mandate for change, identify others to become advocates of change and prepare to be pioneers of the new culture. Practices and expectations need to become interwoven into the products and services.

The authors make an excellent case for building a solid foundation to avoid the “program of the day” response so common with new management objectives. Written rules must change to sustain change. The authors address diversity in terms of: race, religion, sexual preference, age, gender, religion, national origin, and multicultural individuals. Businesses need to learn that diversity applies to customers as well. Everyone wins when everyone is truly included.

Subtle forms of harassment must be eliminated. The authors fully describe eleven required inclusive behaviors that provide the reader with solid information to begin implementing an organizational plan.

Additional attention is given to the business value of leveraging diversity. The authors describe gains to be made as an employer, benefits to the community, and ultimately increasing value in the marketplace. The book also offers advice to create momentum and ultimately succeed in achieving an inclusion breakthrough. The final chapters describe making diversity a way of life and continuously challenging the status quo.

The authors provide strong advice without packaging everything into a one size fits all approach with suggestions such as, “Find a way to strengthen the power and voice of the choir members as catalysts for

change”, and “walk toward your talk.” The authors’ vision is, “to change the world by changing one organization at a time.”

This book has value for all employers and groups. The numerous examples compel the reader to explore beliefs in the workplace and recognize the difference between an organization that has merely succeeded in employing a diverse workforce and one that has maximized the potential of its workforce. I recommend this book for anyone that serves as a member of a workplace team as well as those in management. Human Resource managers may also want to read this book in conjunction with a review of employee benefit plans.

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