Best Practices to Further Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Book Publishing Supply Chain

On 21 October 2020, BISG convened colleagues from across the industry in a Town Hall meeting to discuss actions and strategies for advancing matters of DEI in their organizations. The best practices listed below were gathered from presentations and commentary shared from members of the book publishing community.

- **Acknowledge** that conversations can be uncomfortable.
- **Develop** a strategic plan within your organization for eliminating bias and supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Create** a task force to focus on advancing matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Develop** a plan for your meeting organization’s specific diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
- **Publish** your organization’s diversity, equity, and inclusion plan, for transparency with your staff, partners, volunteers, and customers.
- **Conduct** (anonymous) surveys: Measure where you are today in terms of staffing, hiring, product development, product mix, marketing; track over time.
- **Share** staff and product diversity metrics with employees.
- **Solicit** suggestions from your staff: hold Town Halls and group discussions.
- **Be open** to hiring from outside of book publishing supply chain.
- **Craft** job descriptions that are inclusive; express openness to all applicants and encourage a diverse applicant pool; language matters.
- **Broaden** onboarding requirements.
- **Consider** the Rooney Rule in your hiring practices: “at least one woman and one underrepresented minority [to] be considered in the slate of candidates for either every open position or every open senior position.” Or both.
- **Employ** AI / software for race- and gender-blind candidate screening.
- **Train** managers in interview techniques to combat unconscious bias.
- **Recognize** and avoid familial, academic nepotism in hiring practices and advancement opportunities.
- **Offer** all interns and staff a living wage.
- **Include** diversity goals in performance appraisals and tie diversity goals to compensation for senior-level executives or where appropriate in your organization.
- **Accept** that diversity isn’t just part of the hiring process; it’s just as vital when considering advancement opportunities for staff and board makeup.
- **Build** a learning community and commit to long-term institutional and systematic transformation.
- **Train** your staff around racial equity, inclusion, unconscious bias, and cross-cultural competence.
- **Establish** relationships of trust and methods of accountability. Create opportunities for communicating feedback; use them for personal, interpersonal, and institutional growth. Remember that trust must be earned every day.
- **Develop** internal mentorship / networking opportunities to support staff and enable them to achieve success and want to stay at your company or institution.
- **Expand** the management table to include voices that haven’t been included before; the point of equity is to disrupt white supremacist hierarchies.
- **Invite** diverse speakers to speak at industry events and represent your company or institution.
- **Remember** that diversity includes BIPOC, people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+. It also refers to diversity of thought and perspective that may have been developed in other industries.
- **Create** platforms for ongoing communication and dialogue on matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Listen** to your staff, partners, and customers.
- **Bring** DEI conversations into all spheres of work in your organization. It’s not just for executive team or a committee or task force.
- **Be aggressive** in not only recruiting young candidates from diverse backgrounds, but also in supporting them on their way up.
- **Acknowledge** the extra work that some employees must take on when faced with microaggressions, and when they’re the only person in the room of an under-represented identity, or when they’re asked to represent an entire community.
- **Use** gender-neutral and non-exclusive or marginalizing language in content and communications you produce.
- **Create** workflows and content and communications that are fully accessible.
- **Expand** industry taxonomies to be more inclusive and reflective of historically underrepresented communities.
- **Partner** with external organizations and forge closer ties with the larger community for the greater good.
- **Look** to other organizations as models for the kinds of change you want to see or what might come next in your work.
- **Set** short-term and long-term goals; be agile, as tools and practices may need to evolve over time.
- **Act** now; don’t wait for diversity to trickle up.

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