

PERSPECTIVES

SPECIAL EDITION

AUGUST 2024

PHRA

AFFILIATE OF
SHRM
BETTER WORKPLACES
BETTER WORLD®

PERSPECTIVES



Table of Contents

- 4 PHRA President's Message
- 5 Why DEI Should Be at the Heart of Your Recruitment Strategy
- 7 A Business Case for Employee Resource Groups
- 9 Ageism Never Gets Old: Tackling Age Bias In A Post-COVID Labor Force
- 11 Developing A Global Mindset
- 13 Modern Rosie the Riveter
- 15 Intentional Inclusivity
- 18 When Talking About an Inclusive Environment, We Have To Discuss 'Splaining'
- 21 Flip the Script
- 23 Members on the Move

**Career Transition
Executive Coaching
Leadership Development
Career Management**

**Calfe & Associates LLC
www.calfeassociates.com
412.760.1619**



PHRA President's Message

Brenda Thoma, PHR

Your Monthly Update from the Pittsburgh Human Resources Association President

Dear Members,

In August, the PHRA comes together to celebrate Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility (DEIBA). While these values are a year-round focus, we give them special attention this month. We invite our members to reflect, listen, and actively foster a community that values everyone.

Today's workplaces are rich with diversity in race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, and sexual orientation, alongside varied educational backgrounds, personalities, skills, and experiences. This diversity presents a historic opportunity for HR professionals, but how do we harness it effectively?

Gaining the necessary knowledge to navigate this dynamic is crucial. I encourage you to engage with our publications and events this month. Here's how PHRA is celebrating our diverse membership:

Featured Articles in Perspectives:

- Ageism Never Gets Old: Tackling Age Bias in A Post-COVID Labor Force
- Why DEI Should Be at the Heart of Your Recruitment Strategy
- Flip the Script: Sexual Orientation in the Workplace
- Modern Rosie the Riveter
- Developing A Global Mindset
- When Talking About an Inclusive Environment, We Have to Discuss 'Splaining
- Intentional Inclusivity
- A Business Case for Employee Resource Groups

Event Highlight:

Join us in-person on **August 7th** for [Championing Diversity: Advancing DEAI in Modern Workplaces!](#) This workshop will boost your professional profile, making you more effective in fostering inclusive environments and leading diverse teams. You will leave empowered to advocate for change within your organization or community.

Workshop Sessions:

- [Reimagining The DEI Committee: Building the Path to Inclusive Excellence](#) by Sonia Layne-Gartside, Global Consultant
- [Facilitating DEAI Programs in HR](#) by Cecile Shellman, Cecile Shellman Consulting
- [Redefining Inclusion](#) by Danielle Mundekis, Director of Inclusion, Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott

I hope you enjoy this special edition of Perspectives and our monthly programs dedicated to equipping you with the tools to meet workplace challenges confidently.

Best regards,

Brenda Thoma, PHR

PHRA President

US Steel, HR Manager

Why DEI Should Be at the Heart of Your Recruitment Strategy

By Robert Half

“It’s just a job” is a phrase you don’t hear much these days. In survey after survey, workers use terms like “purpose,” “meaning” and “connection” when describing their ideal role and employer. They’re driven not only by financial incentives, but also by values — and they want the companies they work for to reflect those values.

Failure to meet these heightened expectations can make retention and recruitment more difficult for employers. In a recent Robert Half survey, 71% of workers said they’d leave an organization whose values do not align with their own.

There are various values that workers and job seekers expect their employers to support today, and high on their list is a strong focus on DEI. People want to feel genuinely welcome, valued and comfortable at work. They want a collaborative and welcoming culture that respects all viewpoints.

Making DEI part of your workplace culture is not only the right thing to do, but given the degree to which professionals feel that it is important for their company to support DEI, it should be at the heart of your hiring strategy. It can help you expand the pool of candidates who want to work at your company. Also, hiring people with different perspectives on business issues can make your company more innovative and customer-centric.

How to embed DEI in your recruitment strategy

Hiring with DEI in mind requires an organization to rethink its recruitment processes. Managers must understand why it’s important and learn some concrete steps for making it happen.

Here’s how you can recruit a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce:

Take stock of your current policies

Start by gathering critical data on what DEI-related gaps currently exist in your organization, what your workforce goals are, what resources are available, and what vendors exist that might meet your company’s needs in the short- and long-term. Devise a plan that is informed from the gaps and implement new policies, design more equitable hiring, feedback and promotion processes, and remove biased heuristics in the hiring process by asking:

- How can the design of our hiring process contribute to candidates feeling valued and represented?
- What are we doing to create a company that is free of discrimination?
- How can we empower managers and leaders to be accountable for their impact and effort?
- What technologies are we employing to address every inflection point of the talent management cycle, especially in relation to hiring?
- Does leadership track quantitative aspects of our workforce (awareness, connection, empathy and mutual respect) as much as they track the qualitative ones (demographics, diversity hiring, promotion rates, retention)?

Set up your team to succeed

Your DEI strategy may flounder if hiring managers commit to it half-heartedly or if they lack the knowledge to draw up and implement best practices.

To avoid the first scenario, encourage leadership to give the program their full-throated support. Getting buy-in for your initiatives from hiring managers and other key players will be easier if the C-suite leads the way. To address any knowledge or skills gaps, give your teams the training they need.

Why DEI Should Be at the Heart of Your Recruitment Strategy (cont.)

By Robert Half

To avoid the second scenario, your human resources (HR) team may be able to hold virtual sessions with company managers covering topics like inclusive communication and counteracting unconscious bias that can inform managers' job postings and interviewing processes.

If your HR group is small, arrange for them to get up to speed on DEI by accessing online certification programs offered by many universities and business schools. If you need to scale up your program quickly, consider hiring a dedicated DEI manager who will already be well-versed in these areas.

Diversify your hiring networks and regions

If you're regularly attracting a nondiverse set of candidates, you're probably relying on a nondiverse set of sourcing channels. For example, current employees and members of your alumni network may offer excellent referrals but with an unconscious bias toward people cut from the same cloth.

To broaden your talent pools, consider forming strategic alliances with organizations dedicated to enhancing opportunities for underrepresented groups. Encourage your campus recruiters to attend job fairs (virtual or in-person) across the full spectrum of colleges and universities, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs).

Another approach to casting a wider net when appealing to a broad range of candidates is considering diverse talent from locations that weren't previously available. Hybrid work further enables companies to embed DEI into their hiring practices by seeking candidates from different geographic, socioeconomic, cultural and abilities backgrounds.

This is one practical solution that not only gets you talent now but also supports a more diverse talent pool that is expansive to include geography, socioeconomic, cultural and ability backgrounds.

Review your job descriptions

Rewrite job descriptions to remove any biased language and include gender-neutral language. Also, think about what kinds of statements could attract future candidates instead of turning them away. Your team may need special training to identify problematic or exclusionary language, and access to artificial intelligence (AI)-powered software that flags and replaces biased phrases.

Collaborate with the company's strategic alliances to post your job descriptions in various locations. After the description is posted, monitor and track the overall diversity of the talent pool and adjust your hiring strategies accordingly.

Putting DEI at the heart of your recruitment strategy is a critical step toward creating a welcoming workplace. Best of all, it's a virtuous circle — the closer you get to your DEI goals, the more likely you are to attract talented, values-driven candidates from all backgrounds. Doing the right thing has rarely made more business sense.

A Business Case for Employee Resource Groups

By Erin Viale, Talent Acquisition Manager, UPMC Insurance Division

In talent acquisition, we often think about [push and pull factors](#). These are the factors that might ‘push’ a candidate away from their current job and ‘pull’ them to ours. One lesson every recruiter learns early in his or her career is that there are many elements of the equation we cannot control. In fact, we can’t control the things candidates care most about: money, schedule and location. These items are generally fixed, and while it’s sometimes possible to get creative, it very often happens that if we cannot pay a candidate what they are looking for, they will not accept our job. This can be devastating if the hiring manager has their heart set on the candidate.

The savvy recruiter does not get discouraged when it seems like candidates are looking for higher salaries. Instead, a great recruiter starts to get hyper-focused on selling the non-monetary benefits of the role. We constantly polish our ‘pitch’ to candidates, which is focused on the total rewards and benefits package, but also culture, and the ways that the company values align with the candidate’s values. [Employee Resource Groups](#) are a great selling point to ‘pull’ candidates away from their current company and over to ours.

Your company, like most companies, might be limited on salary increases. However, robust employee resource groups have little cost associated, and can have a benefit of employee recruitment and retention. The question your candidate may be asking is this: “How do I fit in with your company culture?” Especially if I am a person of color, or LGBTQIA+, or a woman in a male-dominated field, or an ally in any of these areas. One possible answer to how they fit in, and how they can support and advocate for inclusion and equity of these groups, is to join an employee resource group.

ERGs are more than 50 years old. The first employee retention group was started at Xerox in 1970 – [The National Black Employees Caucus](#). Joseph Wilson, then CEO of Xerox, worked with employees to create the resource group to address discrimination that was occurring at Xerox. The group was highly successful, and was the frontrunner for more ERGs at Xerox, and groups that began forming at other companies in duplication of the model. In 1978, Hewlett Packard created the first ERG for LGBT employees. Today, [Popular ERGs](#) include groups for caregivers, cultural diversity, flexible/remote workers, generational groups, people with disabilities, veterans, and women in the workplace, among others.

What is the purpose of an ERG? What do they do?

The purpose of an ERG is not defined. The company can create the objectives for the group. In a perfect world, the ERG would have some autonomy to make recommendations to leadership about what would make membership feel empowered and valued. In an interview with [Forbes](#), Farzana Nayani, ERG expert said “starting an ERG takes commitment from all levels of the organization. It’s important to have support and understanding from allies who are not a member of the demographic of the group. That can be done by open communication, incorporating an approach of both education and advocacy, as well as preserving space for the community group members to address their own needs separate from allies from time to time.”

The main benefit of an ERG is to increase inclusion at your company. It gives employees a forum to voice their needs, and it gives leadership some concrete ideas of how to be more inclusive. But there is another benefit of an

A Business Case for Employee Resource Groups (cont.)

By Erin Viale, Talent Acquisition Manager, UPMC Insurance Division

ERG that we don't often talk about. An ERG is a great forum for talent development. An ERG can be a good forum for employees to demonstrate talents that they might not have an opportunity to showcase within the ordinary scope of their work. Maybe you have an Admin Assistant with amazing leadership skills, or an Account Manager who is gifted at event coordination. You may never know this without these opportunities for employees to shine by doing something outside their ordinary scope of work. So empower the members of your ERG to get things done - it will help you see where you may have some previously unrecognized talent.

Jeff Bezos used [three interview questions](#) in the early days of Amazon to determine if someone would be a fit for the growing company. These questions were shared in a Stockholder Letter 20 years ago, when Amazon's market cap was \$18.1 billion. Today, Amazon's market cap is over \$2 trillion, so it is well worth examining the interviewing methods of Bezos, who built a team responsible for amazing financial growth. The three interview questions are these:

1. Will you admire this person?
2. Will this person raise the average effectiveness of the group they're entering?
3. Along what dimension might this person be a superstar?

I am particularly interested in the third question: "along what dimension might this person be a superstar?" This question is really a question of where a person does their best work. If someone is not thriving in their role, it could be a simple mismatch between skills and duties. This method of asking yourself what circumstance might allow this person to be a superstar puts a leader in the mindset of pushing the boundaries of what a person is capable of. It may not be possible to change a person's day-to-day duties, but a robust ERG can give the person an outlet to do more of the work that lets them be a superstar.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion has been a part of our culture now for decades. But, like any innovation, a good DEI program requires constant attention and improvement. This will become more important than ever as Gen Z takes on a larger presence in the workforce. According to a [LinkedIn survey](#), 87% of Gen Z professionals said they would leave their companies for a new role if the new position better aligned with their values. Companies are going to have to be more disciplined and intentional about culture if they want to attract Gen Z talent, and Employee Resource Groups are a great place to start.

Ageism Never Gets Old: Tackling Age Bias In A Post-COVID Labor Force

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

When you hear about age discrimination, it usually pertains to an older job candidate not being selected due to their age. The truth is, ageism can potentially affect **all ages** and points in an employee's life cycle. As I write this article, I'm reminded that I'm now older than the average employee age in my organization. As I get closer to being in the "older workers" category, this topic hits home for me and my generation, but also, I realize just how much stereotypes on age affect our daily lives. While the [law prohibits discrimination](#) in any aspect of employment — "hiring, firing, pay, job assignments, promotions, layoff, training, benefits, and any other term or condition of employment," ageism undoubtedly still occurs.

Over the past several years there has been public light shed on younger generations increasingly experiencing discrimination in the workforce, oftentimes in subtle ways. Being told you're "too young" for a promotion or "experience needs to come in the form of years on the job" occurs far too often. At the other end of the spectrum, older generations are depicted as "scared" of new technology or are "counting down the days to retirement." These are just a few of the harmful myths that plague the workforce, as I'm sure we've all heard at least one of these so casually mentioned before. As the job market continues to stumble back post-COVID, tackling ageism is a must.

What Is Ageism?

Ageism, a term coined in 1969, was first [described as](#) "prejudicial attitudes towards older people, old age, and the aging process." Today, ageism is known as discrimination or prejudice based on someone's age — young or old. This updated understanding shows how ageism affects everyone — as long as stereotypes around age exist.

While the law is still directed towards protecting older generations with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) forbidding age discrimination against people who are age 40 or older, some states, like New Jersey, protect workers age 18 and older from being discriminated against for being considered too young.

Ageism Affects More Than Just Hiring

While hiring decisions is often where most perceive ageism primarily occurs — [this article from NY Times](#) suggests that only a handful of lawsuits concerning age discrimination are reported during the hiring process. Consider, for example, that Millennials are citing instances of age discrimination beyond hiring, and at higher rates than those older than them, according to [NY Post](#). In fact, more than half — 52% — of American workers aged 18 to 34 say they have witnessed or experienced ageism in their jobs, [according to Glassdoor's 2019 Diversity and Inclusion Survey](#). That's compared to 39% of workers 55 and older who say the same in an online survey of more than 1,100 American workers.

To put things into perspective, for the first time in our history, there are five generations in the workplace. According to [Pew Research](#), the generations are:

- Traditionalists—born 1928 to 1945
- Baby Boomers—born 1946 to 1964
- Generation X—born 1965 to 1980
- Millennials—born 1981 to 1996
- Generation Z—born 1997 to 2021

I'm stating the obvious but that is a wide range of ages. In large companies, it is common to have individuals from each generation represented on the same team.

In 2019, the median working age was 42.3. In the US, Millennials account for over a third of the US Labor Force. Early

Ageism Never Gets Old: Tackling Age Bias In A Post-COVID Labor Force (cont.)

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

last year, [I touched on working with Generation Z](#) as their presence will only grow in the coming years. Manpower Group predicted Gen Z would make up 24% of the workforce in 2020, though, many workforce predictions from the past year are undoubtedly skewed given COVID. Additionally, workers age 55+ are expected to make up a [quarter of employed U.S. adults](#) by 2026.

How Ageism Often Goes Unnoticed

Ageism can sometimes be hidden behind things like “culture fit,” which I have [touched upon before](#) on my blog. I shared, “Often times, hiring managers will weigh a candidate’s potential fit over talent, credentials and experience — a dangerous tactic that can lead to inadvertent (and sometimes illegal) discrimination based off demographic differences or personality traits.” Some examples of those myths or assumed personality traits might include:

- Older workers are just counting the days until retirement.
- Older workers don’t have today’s technology skills.
- Older workers won’t report to younger managers.
- Older workers will only accept high salaries.
- Older workers aren’t creative or willing to adapt.

On the other hand, for the younger age group, some myths include:

- Younger workers are lazy and don’t work enough.
- Younger workers are too casual.
- Younger workers don’t have in-person skills.
- Younger workers aren’t serious enough.
- Younger workers are entitled and think they know it all.

“Discrimination has common roots in fear of differences,” Dr. Peter Cappelli, an expert in human resources, public policy, and talent management, [explains](#). “Myths persist when we don’t see evidence, and we haven’t had a contradictory experience ourselves.” So, how do these harmful myths translate into discriminatory actions?

It happens when learning opportunities, like conferences, certifications, or networking events are exclusively offered to younger employees. Or when assumptions are made that you don’t need time off because you don’t have young kids at home which also serves as a factor in why your manager selects you to travel all the time. It can also come into play with promotions when there’s a cap on experience levels or the number of years needed to advance. This isn’t to say that years of experience aren’t important; it’s merely to remember that it’s only one factor — two people can learn dramatically different things in one year.

What Can Be Done

If you’re heading into an interview — whether as an interviewer or interviewee — check out my previous [blog post](#) detailing best interview practices. If, like me, you’re a member of an older generation and you’re looking to update your resume, [Indeed has great examples and step-by-step guides](#).

Because I thought that ageism was uncommon, I haven’t been thinking about ageism nearly enough, especially when considering how it can affect people long after the hiring process. As I’m inching closer to not being in the “younger” crowd, I personally will be more proactive in calling out ageism. I hope by sharing this blog that you will do the same.

Developing A Global Mindset

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

In an increasingly interconnected world, it's more important than ever to adopt a global mindset. This kind of perspective isn't limited to world travelers or those who have experienced different cultures firsthand; it's a mindset that encourages people to view the world through a broader lens of curiosity and acceptance. It requires shifting one's worldview to recognize that there is no "normal" or "right;" instead, it's about appreciating and understanding many coexisting perspectives.

The Essence Of A Global Mindset

A global mindset goes beyond acquiring stamps on a passport or merely tolerating cultural differences. It involves actively seeking diverse viewpoints, understanding the nuances of various cultures and communities, and applying this knowledge to your personal and professional networks. It means acknowledging that your way of thinking is just one of many valid perspectives.

The Absence Of A Universal "Normal"

One of the fundamental principles of a global mindset is acknowledging that there is no universal "normal." What is considered ordinary or acceptable in one family may be completely different in another. For example, concepts of punctuality, communication styles, and even work ethics can vary significantly from one place to another.

This understanding is crucial in the workplace, as it helps individuals avoid making hasty judgments or assuming their way of doing business is superior. Instead, it encourages open-mindedness and a willingness to adapt and learn.

Bridging In-Groups And Out-Groups

In sociology, you'll often hear the terms "in-group" and "out-group," which refer to groups that an individual may or may not identify with. Common examples include peer groups, sports teams, political parties, and religious affiliations. While it can certainly be meaningful and positive to identify with a group, there are two sides to that coin. Consider, for example, identifying as a Pittsburgher can be a source of pride for many, some transplants to the Steel City might relate to feeling like outsiders.

Having a global mindset means being open to forming connections with individuals you share common traits with (in-group) as well as those who are different from you in various ways (out-group). By understanding barriers between groups, you can foster a more inclusive work environment.

Embracing Different Realities

A global mindset allows us to see and appreciate different realities. It encourages us to step outside of our comfort zones and explore perspectives that may challenge our preconceived notions. Let's explore how this can be applied at work:

1. Cultural Communication

In a globalized workforce, effective communication is key. A global mindset helps individuals understand that communication is not just about language but also about cultural context. It encourages active listening, empathy, and the ability to adapt communication styles to suit diverse audiences.

Developing A Global Mindset (cont.)

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

2. Conflict Resolution

Conflict is natural and will arise when people with different worldviews and expectations come together. A global mindset equips people with the tools to navigate these conflicts constructively. It encourages compromise, mediation, and a focus on shared goals.

3. Decision-Making & Problem-Solving

A diverse team can approach problem-solving from different angles. Varied perspectives can result in more well-rounded decisions and innovative solutions, as each team member brings their unique background and insights to the table.

Having A Global Mindset Is A Strength

By breaking down barriers and actively seeking to understand and appreciate new points of view, we build a more inclusive work environment. Having broadened perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences is a strength, not a weakness. It acknowledges that there's no one fixed way to see the world or solve problems; it embraces how different realities can lead to personal growth and professional success. On an individual level, it allows you to flourish in any environment.

Modern Rosie the Riveter

By Diane Houser, Director, Human Resources, Cygnus Manufacturing Company

Do you remember the famous image of Rosie the Riveter from World War II? She was an icon in her time and she remains so today. She's determined, strong, and notably she looks confident in a role that was traditionally male.

Companies can take a lesson out of the war departments book when they created Rosie during WWII. They had to appeal to a population who had no exposure to mechanical work, who considered those roles to be for males, and to make the position seem glamorous somehow. That was a tall order indeed.



And yet, the image of Rosie the Riveter did come to symbolize all those things. Women joined the workforce to help support the war effort. In fact, by 1944, women held one third of all manufacturing jobs in the United States*. When World War II came to an end, 'more than 19 million women were in the workforce and 350,000 women had served in the US Armed Forces*''.

US Department of Labor tracking shows that women's participation in the workforce has increased since the war with a peak in 1999 at around 60%*. Yet projections for 2021-2031 highlight that the jobs that women seek still tend to be related to work that has been traditionally female.

Top 15 Occupations by Share of Women in 2021 and Projected for 2031					
OCCUPATION	SHARE OF WORKERS WHO ARE WOMEN	2021 EMPLOYMENT (BOTH SEXES)	2031 EMPLOYMENT (BOTH SEXES)	MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGE, 2021	TYPICAL EDUCATION NEEDED FOR ENTRY
Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers	96.8%	607,900	686,100	\$36,710	Bachelor's Degree
Speech-Language Pathologists	95.1%	155,800	193,900	\$79,060	Master's Degree
Dental Hygienists	95.1%	214,000	293,100	\$77,810	Associate Degree
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	91.3%	667,200	698,500	\$48,070	Postsecondary Nondegree Award
School Psychologists	90.4%	57,500	61,100	\$78,780	Master's Degree
Veterinary Technologists & Technicians	89.8%	122,800	146,900	\$36,850	Associate Degree
Dietitians & Nutritionists	89.5%	74,700	79,700	\$61,650	Bachelor's Degree
Medical Records Specialists	88.8%	186,400	198,700	\$45,650	Postsecondary Nondegree Award
Nurse Practitioners	87.4%	246,700	359,400	\$120,680	Master's Degree
Child, Family, & School Social Workers	86.8%	349,800	378,900	\$49,150	Bachelor's Degree
Registered Nurses	86.7%	3,130,600	3,326,000	\$77,600	Bachelor's Degree

For HR professionals this is a concern for many reasons. First, because recruiters will be competing for the same population pool if a position tends to be sought after by one gender over another. Second, this puts pressure on finding diversity in that population pool when we all know that diversity makes our companies stronger. Third, for those of us in companies that are not the top jobs for women list, we have a higher hurdle to get over to reach candidates.

As a professional woman, I am hopeful that young women coming into the work world will see value in trying something new just like Rosie the Riveter. There are roles for women in manufacturing and the trades that do not require a 4-year commitment to

college and student loan debt. Many of them have specific training programs and offer on the job training.

Check out the 'Women Who Weld' program (www.womenwhoweld.org) that not only teaches welding but helps to find jobs for women welders. Closer to home, the Trade Institute of Pittsburgh (www.tipgh.org) provides vocational training to those who need support as they begin a career or have barriers to employment. Apprentice.org (www.apprentic.org), a branch of the Pennsylvania Apprentice Coordinators Association (PACA), is a Harrisburg based organization that encourages women to enter the trades. These are just a few examples

Modern Rosie the Riveter (cont.)

By Diane Houser, Director, Human Resources, Cygnus Manufacturing Company

of organizations that focus on helping train and source job opportunities for women and those who might need some help.

Delivering good HR to businesses that rely on mechanical or technical skills, we should be looking beyond a 4-year degree to candidates that come to us with different backgrounds with possibly no experience at all. Even for those of us who are not seeking that type of labor pool, there is still a lot to be said for looking at candidates without a typical background.

It's not just the older generations that drove change, Gen Z and Gen Alpha are rapidly moving into the work world every day. They have signaled that they will approach the work world differently just like Rosie had to. Generation Z, also known as Zoomers with birthdates in the mid-1990s to about 2010, are the first generation with internet access from a young age. Generation Alpha is the demographic cohort that has never known a world without technology*.

Technology levels aside, these two groups are likely to have as dramatic an impact as Rosie's "Greatest Generation" who fought in World War II. Like Rosie, they will be looked at to fill roles that they may have never even considered. They will be sought after for jobs where technical skills are the priority and to cover employee shortfalls with a smaller workforce population.

Let us as Human Resources professionals, always be seeking "Rosies", those determined, strong, and confident employees, regardless of generation and gender. The world might be changing but we will always need good people!

[Table of Statistics on Women in the World War II Era Workforce · SHEC: Resources for Teachers \(cuny.edu\)](#)

[Women of World War II | The National WWII Museum | New Orleans \(nationalww2museum.org\)](#)

[Working Women: Data from the Past, Present and Future | U.S. Department of Labor Blog \(dol.gov\)](#)

[Generation Alpha - Wikipedia](#)

Intentional Inclusivity

By Michael Penwell, M.S.

Intent is one of the most value-charged and multi-faceted words that I can think of from an HR perspective. The work that HR professionals engage in daily is very intentional and strategic. In HR we often contend with the concept of intent during meetings and investigations and are confronted with the reality that intent is sometimes quite different than impact. Intent is also used when engaging in conversations about diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI & B) initiatives. The question of intent from a DEI & B perspective is critical in creating a culture where teammates feel valued, and where they feel individually important to the successful outcome of the work that they are doing. Our relationship with the concept of intent toward DEI & B initiatives denotes the difference between a culture of performative allyship and determines the outcome of whether our DEI & B initiatives are successful.

What is Intentional Inclusivity?

In the context of this article, intentional inclusivity can be defined as the deliberate and continued actions that company's take that actively engage underrepresented (often historically marginalized groups) employees, that actively welcomes them into the company culture where these teammates feel as though they matter, and continuously demonstrates that they are valued for who they are and what perspectives they bring.

Intentional Inclusivity should be the strategic foundation of every DEI & B initiative, but keep in mind that strategy is not enough. We should be looking at our diversity and inclusion as two separate topics that work toward complimenting each other. An effective way to look at this is: implementing practices around intentional inclusivity will help us reach our short- and long-term goals toward reaching a culture where DEI & B is valued. Intentional Inclusivity means a great deal of long-term planning and commitment and consistent revisiting of company values in terms of prioritization of support for DEI & B campaigns and activities.

Intentional Inclusivity also involves personal dedication and development on the part of our people leaders and HR professionals to be better prepared and equipped to plan for and respond to situations in the workplace as they occur.

Organizational Commitment to Intentional Inclusion

Companies are highlighting phrases like company culture, the employee experience, and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in their marketing and brand materials to retain talented teammates and to attract potential employees to increase their talent pool and to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds.

Examples of successful implementation of Intentional Inclusion are, but not limited to:

- Highlight resources available to various communities that have been historically marginalized, such as more detailed explanations of employee benefits that are easy to locate in posted company-wide resources.
- Implementing and continual support for Employee Resource Groups.
- Sharing videos and statements from employees from diverse backgrounds on company websites that highlight employee experiences. (This one is particularly powerful but be wary of unintentional tokenization of the teammates that are being featured!).

Intentional Inclusivity (cont.)

By Michael Penwell, M.S.

- Diversity training and unconscious bias development sessions offered to employees at all levels.
- Leadership specific training that targets company commitment to DEI & B and provides leaders with concrete understanding and expectations of the influence and responsibility that leaders have in defining the workplace culture.
- Year-round recognition of diversity at your organization.

These kinds of commitments toward being intentional in our inclusivity practices have a powerful impact.

HR as Champions of Intentional Inclusivity

HR professionals are natural allies and champions in the work of intentional inclusivity and the day-to-day work that we do affords us unique opportunities to positively impact the culture within our organizations at both the micro and macro levels as we are often asked to be present at meetings with members at all levels of our organizations and we can leverage that exposure to powerful effect.

There is no roadmap to successfully navigating this process, but below are recommendations that may help:

1. Training and Development

Diversity is a fact of our workforce, and it is ever evolving. Make arrangements to attend diversity-related trainings as a participant. There is an incalculable value to remaining aware of the latest trends, best practices, and increased self-awareness that results from active participation in these sessions. These opportunities can also connect you with additional resources and the ability to examine company policy through a fresh perspective.

2. Get Involved

Active HR involvement and attendance in DEI & B programs and initiatives may have more impact than you think. Consider your participation in these events as an opportunity to engage the community that puts you in the same space as the people that you support and may increase the level of comfort that these teammates have if they have need to approach HR regarding concerns or to provide feedback.

3. Active Listening

Every interaction is an opportunity to gauge how teammates that you support are doing. These conversations can provide insight into the cultural health of your organization and offer ideas on ways to address needs as they arise.

4. Challenge Assumptions

It is easy in HR to err on the side of looking at the strategic bottom line of business needs and directives. Intentional Inclusivity may require us to challenge these assumptions and question perceived biases and assumptions to ensure that decisions made are fair and equitable.

5. Accountability

If you identify as an ally, make sure that your allyship is backed up with meaningful actions and interactions with the work and the people that you encounter daily.

Intentional Inclusivity (cont.)

By Michael Penwell, M.S.

Fostering intentional inclusivity is just as much an ongoing personal journey as a professional one that transforms intentions into impactful actions that serve to support our ongoing efforts in DEI & B.

Embracing intentional inclusivity is not just a strategic move; it is a commitment to fostering a workplace where every voice matters. By actively engaging underrepresented groups, challenging assumptions, we are creating safe spaces, and we can build an intentional culture that values diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. There are a few great articles and best practices about intentional inclusivity available online if you are interested in exploring and learning more about how you can incorporate these concepts into your HR toolkit. Links to these articles have been posted below:

1. Inclusive Leadership: Steps to Take to Get it Right: [Inclusive Leadership: Steps to Take to Get it Right | CCL](#)
2. The Path to Intentional Inclusiveness: [The Path to Intentional Inclusiveness - The Mouse and the Elephant \(mouseandelephant.com\)](#)
3. Intentional Inclusivity in a Five-Minute Read: [Intentional Inclusivity In A Five-Minute Read \(forbes.com\)](#)
4. Intentional Inclusion in the Modern Workplace: [\(1\) Intentional Inclusion in the Modern Workplace | LinkedIn](#)
5. Intentional Inclusion at work: Definitions and examples: [Intentional inclusion at work: Definitions and examples - PowerToFly](#)

When Talking About an Inclusive Environment, We Have To Discuss ‘Splaining’

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

Though most people see Spring as a stepping stone we must cross over to get to Summer, it's a great time for growth and change, both personally and professionally. This Spring, there's a lot of change happening — vaccines are steadily rolling out, and the hope of returning to “normalcy” is within reach. As some of us start to head back into our offices, I'm hopeful about those lingering promises to “do better” that many of us made this past year. It's also my hope that these promises are fulfilled, and it's up to us to hold our companies accountable so that these important topics of inclusion and diversity in the workplace span further than just during a movement or national month.

But, change can sometimes feel like a double-edged sword — bringing a lot of discomfort to those who are learning (or unlearning). Often, the coping mechanism for dealing with discomfort is putting ourselves at the center instead of actively listening. Still, too often, people don't realize when it's not their turn to speak. While we might think that open conversation makes for an inclusive environment, it's not always needed from everyone.

When we don't feel like we have adequate knowledge about a topic, our discomfort can overpower us. As humans, we don't enjoy discomfort, and our bodies will try anything to get out of it. Instead of sitting with discomfort, we tend to center ourselves in the conversation, as we know our experiences better than anyone else's. This, however, can come in the form of interrupting, assuming, and belittling others. I'm talking about ‘splaining — a huge barrier to creating inclusive workplaces.

Mansplaining, Whitesplaining, Parentsplaining... There's A Lot Of ‘Splaining Going On.

First, what do I mean by ‘splaining? By now, we're all familiar with the term mansplaining — in 2018, [mansplaining](#) became so widely referenced that it was added to Merriam-Webster as “what occurs when a man talks condescendingly to someone (especially a woman) about something he has incomplete knowledge of, with the mistaken assumption that he knows more about it than the person he's talking to does.” This isn't limited to just men, though. ‘Splaining is essentially when condescending explanations are targeted at someone who is talking, regardless of age, race, gender, societal class, etc., and it's a huge barrier that often prevents inclusive environments. It makes people feel undervalued, reinforces stereotypes, and can even stifle career projection. [This Forbes article](#) does a great job of explaining these three impacts.

We Don't Always Have Some ‘Splaining To Do

People experience ‘splaining on a frequent occurrence, but it seldom gets discussed. I'm sure we can all think of an example of ‘splaining — from parents lecturing expecting parents to managers talking down to their colleagues. One of the most recent high-profile examples involves (ex?) bachelor host Chris Harrison. In an [interview with Rachel Lindsay](#), the franchise's first Black Bachelorette, Harrison found himself in hot water for not only mansplaining but also whitesplaining when he defended Bachelor cast member Rachael Kirkconnell's racist actions. Harrison chose not only to ignore Lindsay's relevant thoughts on the matter, which were based on her first-hand lived experiences, but attempted to dismiss her perspective and instead suggested grace should be given to all.

When Talking About an Inclusive Environment, We Have To Discuss ‘Splaining’ (cont.)

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

When instances like the Harrison interview are brought to the public, people are often divided, some understanding all too well how it feels to be ‘splained. And then there are those who bring up an opposing view — should we just be silent? In reality, being against ‘splaining doesn’t equate to being pro-censorship. Nothing disqualifies you from sharing opinions and disagreements or from sharing different viewpoints — in fact, this is key to having an inclusive environment. **The issue arises, though, when your opinion invalidates someone else’s lived experience or expertise in trying to prove your point. Instead of engaging in a conversation, ‘splainers merely try to get their point across, assuming their point is the only valid opinion.**

Am I ‘Splaining?

When it happens, we’re glad it wasn’t us, but anyone can find themselves there if they don’t engage in conversations mindfully. Before reacting or responding to a comment someone makes, think:

Was this asked for?

Is this the right time and place?

Is there implicit bias at work?

Is what I’m about to say making unfair assumptions about this person?

Do I have experience?

Assumptions on people’s knowledge based on their sex, race, and class are often the root of ‘splaining. Mansplaining, for instance, plays into the implicit bias of men being seen as more authoritative, louder, and the “person in charge.”

The devil doesn’t always need an advocate, meaning you don’t always need to offer the opposing opinion just for the sake of it. Explaining things to knowledgeable people not only wastes time but, no matter the intent, implies that you know more than that person and it’s your job to educate them.

Remember, if you haven’t lived through the experience being described, or you’ve extensively studied it to truly understand how a person who experienced it may feel, you may have drawn entirely different conclusions from the same experience, but that experience is solely theirs, and you cannot tell someone their experience is invalid.

So, What Can We Do?

We all are born with biases, and we’re all human, so nobody can ever be perfect. But while you might not be aware of your assumptions, it doesn’t make it right, and it’s not an excuse to continue. The hardest thing about something unconscious as ‘splaining is just that — it happens when we don’t even realize it.

One way to become more aware of it is by [practicing active listening](#) — listening that does not center on you and simply acknowledges what that person was saying. If you find yourself ‘splaining, acknowledge it, apologize, and do better.

When Talking About an Inclusive Environment, We Have To Discuss ‘Splaining’ (cont.)

By James E. Taylor, Ph.D., Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer and Chief Talent Management Officer, UPMC

Remember The “I” In D&I

Too often, there will be a lot of work made towards diversifying the workplace but no effort to address inclusion.

Microaggressions, making assumptions, and ‘splaining and the silence that usually follows is a surefire way to make someone feel uninvited. Make it a point to encourage calling these things out if you see others engaging in it, specifically if you have the same background as the person. This can also go for gendered assumptions as well. Instead of assuming gender identities, take a [non-gendered approach](#).

Ultimately, if you get called out, it’s okay to be embarrassed. It’s natural to get defensive, but by living with that discomfort, we’ll be able to apologize, allow ourselves to be humbled, and then learn from it, so it doesn’t happen again.

FLIP *the* script

SEXUAL ORIENTATION IN THE WORKPLACE

Words reflect workplace culture. Even when we have the best intentions, our words can reinforce negative stereotypes around sexual orientation. We must recognize that our words matter and take action by using words that create inclusive environments where people feel both that they are valued and that they belong.

IMPACT

Not being able to bring their whole selves to work can isolate lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) employees and chip away at their ability to forge valuable relationships with co-workers

**"TALKING
ABOUT YOUR
SEXUAL
ORIENTATION
IS NOT
PROFESSIONAL."**

RESEARCH SAYS

Straight workers often make casual references to their sexual orientation with colleagues during routine small talk. Similar sharing by LGB individuals can be unfairly deemed inappropriate or unprofessional.¹

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Use inclusive language such as "partner" or "spouse" rather than "husband" or "wife."

IMPACT

Depending on the situation, outing colleagues can have serious repercussions on their emotional and/or physical well-being, employment, economic stability, personal safety, and/or religious or family situations.²

**"YOU KNOW
THEY'RE GAY,
RIGHT?"**

RESEARCH SAYS

Coming out is a deeply personal individual choice and process that rarely happens just once. Approximately three-quarters of all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) workers hide who they are in the workplace to some extent, with nearly half choosing to be open with some colleagues but not others.³

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Ask colleagues how you can best be an ally for them while respecting their privacy.⁴

IMPACT

This phrase can demean LGB employees, make them feel unsafe and unwelcome, and may lead them to become less engaged at work.⁵

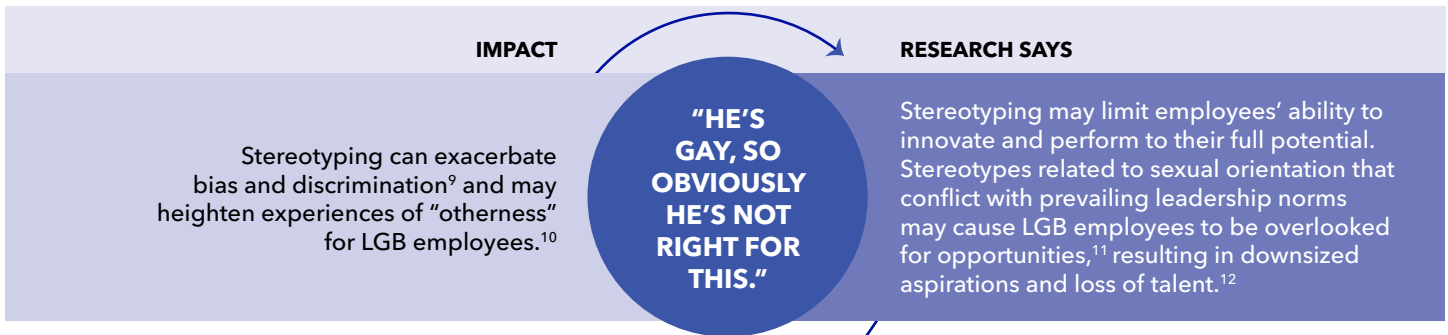
**"THAT'S SO
GAY."**

RESEARCH SAYS

Over 40% of LGBT employees have experienced some form of discrimination on the job⁶ or take actions such as hiding who they are to avoid it.⁷

WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Interrupt derogatory language, offensive comments, and "jokes" to let people know that this kind of language is not okay.⁸



WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

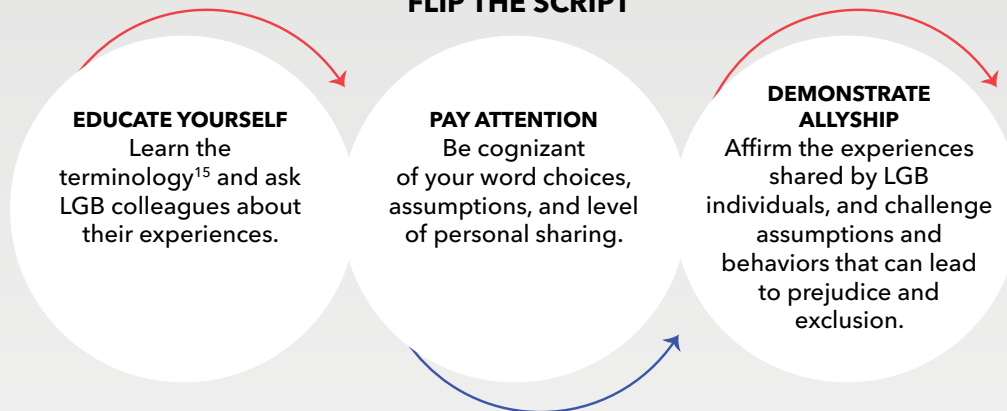
Focus on objective standards of performance, not assumptions or subjective preferences such as “style” or “fit.”



WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

Get to know colleagues who are different from you, and engage in courageous conversations to broaden your perspectives.

FLIP THE SCRIPT



Members on the Move

Congratulations to the following PHRA members on their recent achievements:

- **Nora Duncan** passed the SHRM-CP Certification exam
- **Valerie Guyton** passed the SHRM-CP Certification exam
- **Kieran Devlin** is now the HR Manager Triangle Fastener Corporation

Members on the Move: Leadership Development & Men as Allies

Dr. Victoria Mattingly, Owner of Mattingly Solutions, and Joe Fetzer, Principal Consultant and Owner of Innovative Organizational Development, delve into best practices for leadership development, with a particular focus on how men can be better allies in the workplace. The discussion highlights the importance of aligning strategic organizational initiatives with core business drivers and covers key areas such as leadership development, embedded consulting, hiring practices, targeted selection, organizational learning and design, employee engagement and retention, and organizational policies and procedures. The conversation emphasizes practical steps men can take to support and advocate for their female colleagues, fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment. Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/live/SskEYWICgu8>



PHRA

AFFILIATE OF
SHRM
BETTER WORKPLACES
BETTER WORLD™