

Strategic Diversity Leadership  
& Addressing Racial Challenges  
in our Cities:  
*Changing Hate into Hope!*

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Many Are  
Doing Their  
Part to Address  
Racial  
Challenges by  
Investing in  
Diversity  
Initiatives

- Netflix - \$120 million donation to HBC's
- PepsiCo – retiring Aunt Jemima and Quaker Oats brands
- NASCAR & NFL
- HBS Dean Nitin's letter addressing the problem of low black representation in MBA programs
- Members of US Military addressing House Armed Services Committee yesterday racial disparities in the Military judicial system that have long persisted.
- House & Senate Bills – President's Executive Order



# The Perfect Storm Factors



Emergence of a national (global) protest

Calls for reform/abolition/defunding of police



Changing Demographics

Face of America is changing!



Persistent Political, Social, and Economic Inequalities

Rising disparities among gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status



The Entertainment & Business Case

NASCAR, NFL, Local business affected,



Political & Legal Threats to Diversity & Democracy

Use of military in policing; immigration rhetoric; hate crimes; harsh/muted federal response.

# Our Communities & Cities Need Help!



City Governance Needs Help in Addressing Systemic Racism



Law Enforcement Cannot Police Themselves; Militarization of policing is a moral/communal problem; criminalization of Blacks a problem



Black Families / Communities experience trauma that affects their mental/educational/economic health



Local business owners and communities are negatively affected with looting & rioting – rage taken out on structures b/c of the system

# The 5 Dimensions of Strategic Diversity Leadership in Addressing Racial Challenges



ORGANIZATIONAL  
LEARNING



STRUCTURAL  
LEADERSHIP



POLITICAL  
LEADERSHIP



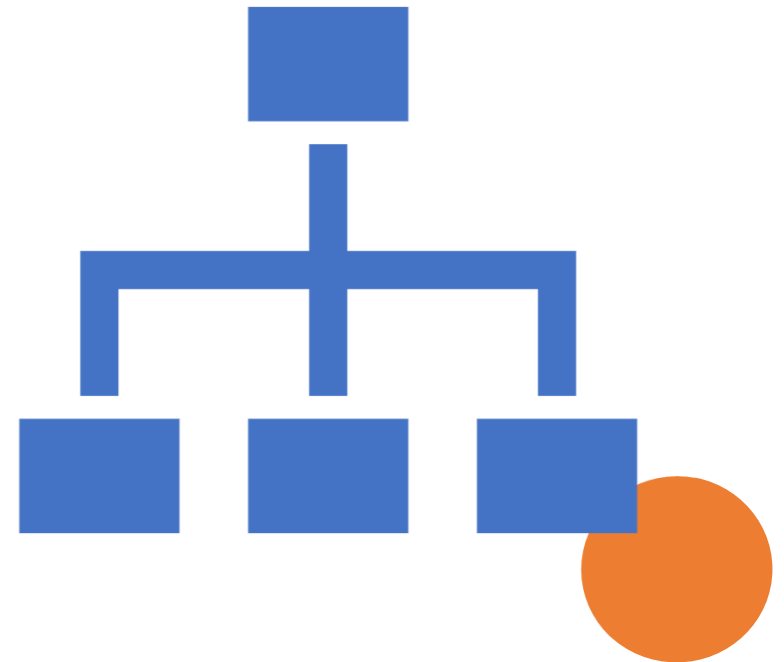
SYMBOLIC  
LEADERSHIP



COLLEGIAL  
LEADERSHIP

# 1. Reform Organizational Learning & Thinking

- Purpose: breaking flawed cycles and flawed organizational logic in order to create new organizational thinking!
- Technique (Triple Loop Learning):
  1. What are we going to do?
    - Tactical response! – Limited in effect!
  2. Why did it happen?
    - Micro-contextual in nature – Theoretical but not action-based!
  3. What is our environmental context?
    - Macro-contextual in nature – Effective!



## 2. Reform Structural Leadership



Purpose: create structures that help drive change that is transformational



Techniques: senior admin & top leadership support is required; realign the organization, its mission, insert accountability and change policies.



Needs: Leverage resources to advance the cause; understand the goals of the organization:

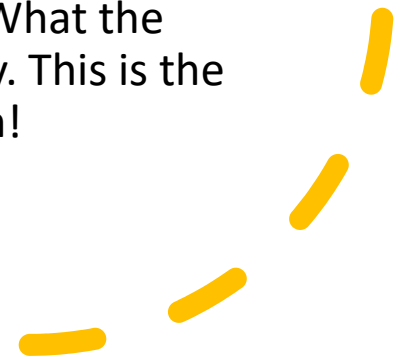
hierarchical;  
specialized;  
rules-based;

### 3. Galvanize Political Leadership

- Purpose: To negotiate power dynamics and compete in setting priorities
- Operational assumption: politics are the natural consequence of institutional life and not inherently bad
- Requirement: must understand the city or institutions' sociopolitical history (related to inclusion/exclusion) in order to learn where lingering tensions reside.
  - What are the current race-based policies and what led to their development? Who is the most vocal opponent to change?
  - Demonstrate the costs/benefits to institutional change

## 4. Craft Effective Symbolic Leadership

- **Purpose**: To manage & mobilize meaning and create municipal/social/institutional buy-in (new contract)
- **Meaning-Making**: understanding the messages conveyed by the (in)actions of the institution and how this relates to *excellence*. (Framing)
- **Method**: Frame the diversity (racial) issue as a significant challenge to navigating change and why it matters. Competency is essential!
- **Establish a brand for Racial Excellence!** What the institution stands for in culture and policy. This is the difference b/t change and transformation!



# 5. Competition in Collegial Leadership

With democratic institutions or institutions that thrive off public accountability, diversity leaders must possess the ability to build coalitions and integrate diversity into the goals of institutional excellence.



Building coalitions is integral to this form of leadership. This may be accomplished by establishing creative connections between institutional priorities and diversity-based goals.

Encourage engagement

Build new relationships  
with key stakeholders

Attract intellectual support  
or buy-in by promoting the  
benefits of the change  
(*pull strategy*)

## What's Needed?

**A Diversity Plan  
to Address  
Systemic Racism**

**Systemic  
Accountability**

# Developing Successful Diversity Plans: Three Approaches

Diversity Plan: an intentionally created document that includes a diversity definition, rationale, goals, recommended actions, assigns responsibility, timelines, budget, and a process of accountability.

- **Integrated Approach** (infusing diversity into strategic plans, goals, and tactics of the organizational structure) – revise every 5 years.
- **Centralized Approach** (diversity treated as one area of strategic focus)
  - 1 year planning process (audits, planning meetings, listening sessions & benchmarking)
  - Conduct an audit: illustrate challenges & opportunities; learn where you are/came from
- **Decentralized Approach** (individual units within a structure develop their own diversity plans)
  - 3-year cycle for development and implementation

# Need for Accountability!



**A Matter of Excellence!**



**Absence of accountability leads  
to failure.**



**It provides a Performance  
Indicator which measures  
achievements over time.**



# The Accountability Scorecard

- Accountability “Scorecards” do the following:
  - **Communicates progress to various stakeholders.**
  - **Serves as a means to deepen the institutions commitment to change.**
  - **Helps institutions attain clarity and consensus about the strategy for achieving diversity**
  - **Provides a means to assess the effectiveness of existing strategies**
  - **Establishes a framework for setting priorities.**

Integrating  
Accountability  
into the  
System:  
“More than  
just window  
dressing!”



Include addressing racial challenges as a part of merit during performance reviews.

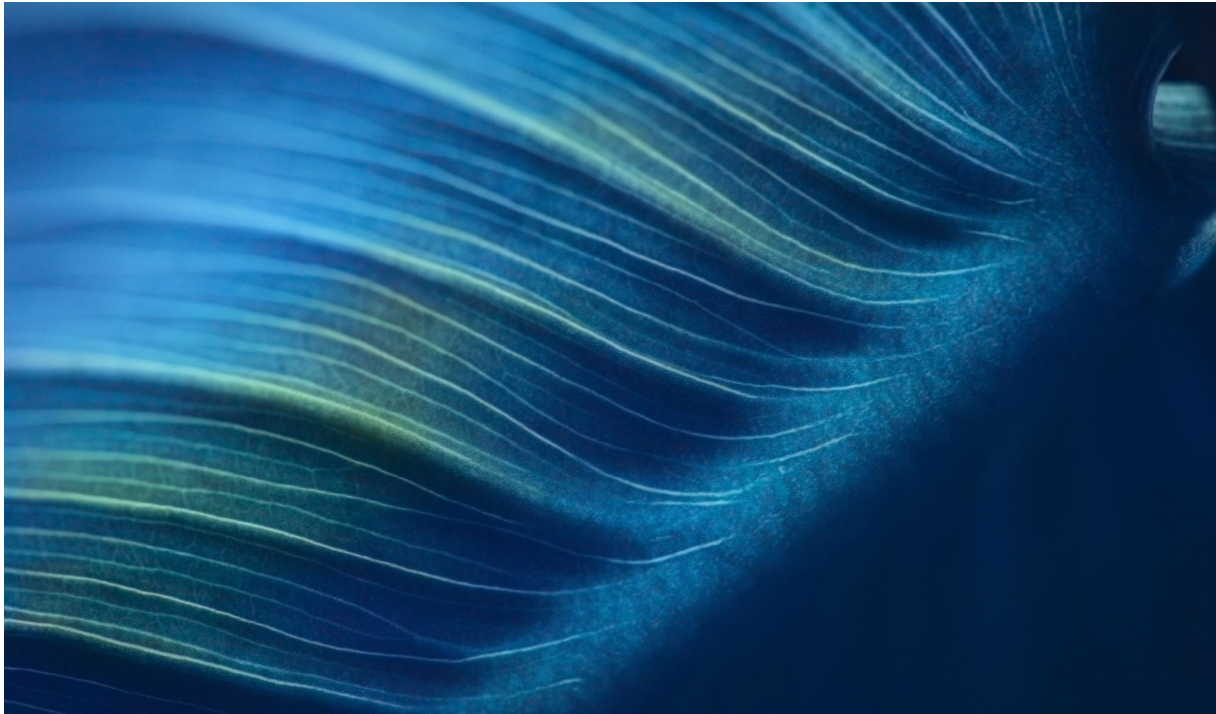


Creating “Structured Learning Forums”:  
bring together stakeholders to share  
perspectives used to drive new initiatives.  
Engage strategic communities!!!!



Benchmarking: assessing performance over time in comparison to other organizations. Used as a catalyst to drive institutions to higher levels of performance.

Take into account not just outcomes, but also processes and capabilities to improve results.



# Benchmarking Types

**Competitive:** comparing performance with a competitor in the same sector (city-city)

**Best-in Class:** comparison of same dimensions among different sectors

**Historical:** comparing past results to current/forecasted performance (used for tracking institutional progress)

**Functional:** comparing efforts with those of institutions from other sectors that share similar procedures (comparing SDL efforts)

**Collaborative:** setting up competitive analysis between institutions or third party

## Why Diversity Efforts Fail?

- Things to Consider:
  - 1.) Do we Respond to a crisis **or** implement proactive strategies that can anticipate challenges and take advantage of opportunities?
  - 2.) Do we Act in isolation **or** build a coalition by leveraging various initiatives/programs?
  - 3.) Are resources present **or** absent for a proper infrastructure to create change?
  - 4.) Is the intervention ad-hoc **or** comprised of best practices, systemic, evidence-based?
  - 5.) Is it a sprint approach **or** a marathon approach?
    - Short or long term solutions

# Examining the Impediments

1. Absence of onboarding of senior leaders:
  - Failure of conceptualizing systemic racial problems
  - Failure to create budget/accountability/incentives
  - Resistance that systemic change is fundamental to excellence
2. Lack of clarity of how the plan will/can be implemented
  - Failure to create a comprehensive framework to outline and track progress
  - Nothing concrete / no ownership
3. Change of organizational culture is not easy
  - Leads to minor adjustments, window dressing, or symbolic changes.

# Typology of Institutional Change & Outcomes

- Two Goals when Pursuing Institutional Change in Addressing Racial Challenges:
  - Depth (the tactics and means you use to expand your reach and scope)
  - Pervasiveness (the actors and teams)

# Typology of Institutional Change & Outcomes

1. Shallow Depth & Narrow Pervasiveness = Minor adjustments (no change)
2. Shallow Depth & Broad Pervasiveness = Far-Reaching Change
3. Great Depth & Narrow Pervasiveness (lacks breadth) = Isolated Change
4. Great Depth & Broad Pervasiveness = Transformation!!!!

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# The Key to Transformation?

- The municipal & institutional culture is altered through a change in:
  - Assumptions about people
  - Behaviors with people
  - Processes that support people
  - Outcomes that elevate people
- Knowing the Difference between:
  - Strategy (knowing where you want to go)
    - “Developing a sustained vision for structural change that connects the dots between tactical elements like, programs, policies, and resources.”
  - Tactics (the means and steps you take to get there)

# Bringing it All Together!

A.) Strategic Diversity Idea: Problem of Systemic Racism

B.) Diversity Planning System for Racial Problems

C.) Diversity Infrastructure to Change Systemic Racism: (diversity offices; committees; etc.)

D.) Senior Leadership Support

E.) Sufficient Resources: (presence of staff & financial support)

F.) Critical Components for Change Activation:

- Incentives
- Accountability
- Rewards

# Stages of Diversity Plan Development for Addressing Systemic Racism

- (A.) Strategic Diversity Idea of Systemic Racism:
  1. Systemic Racism is not defined at all
  2. Systemic Racism begins to emerge in conversation
  3. Systemic Racism is defined in broad (systemic) & inclusive terms
  4. Systemic Racism is broadly defined and is of the highest institutional priorities are part of the institutions' commitment to excellence

- (B.) Diversity Plan to Address Systemic Racism :
  1. No Diversity Plan exists for Systemic Racism
  2. A major goal of the institution is to develop a plan to address systemic racism
  3. A plan exists with several layers of success/implementation
  4. Implementation of comprehensive system of diversity-planning systems to address systemic racism exists as an embedded component of the institutional structure/culture



## Stages of Diversity Plan Development to Address Systemic Racism

## Stages of Diversity Plan Development for Addressing Systemic Racism

- (C.) Diversity Infrastructure: (diversity offices; committees; etc.)
  1. Few or no institutional infrastructural resources
  2. An element of the infrastructure exists but is marginal and underfunded.
  3. Several initiatives emerge across the institutional culture
  4. A CDO exists and their role supports the position of the President/Director, along with governance structures which incorporate the SDL.

- (D.) Senior Leadership Support in Addressing Systemic Racism:
  1. Addressing Systemic Racism is not on the radar of senior leadership as a goal or priority
  2. Senior leadership begins to engage but no resources; symbolic support
  3. Senior leaders have a strong grasp of the issues and bring support for resources across all aspects of the institution
  4. Senior leadership is a vocal advocate and prioritizes prevention and action in all aspects of the city development:
    1. Excellence
    2. Funding
    3. Developing strategic partnerships
    4. Building communal relations



## Stages of Diversity Plan Development for Addressing Systemic Racism

- (E.) Sufficient Resources: (presence of staff & financial support)
  1. Sufficient resources are non-existent
  2. Limited funding is allocated
  3. Resource allocation is high but there is a challenge of how to maximize the return on investments for racial diversity; resources may come and go as priorities change and the economy declines
  4. Funding is generous, stable (protected in good and bad times), and funding is a priority for development/fundraising.

## Stages of Diversity Plan Development for Addressing Systemic Racism

- (F.) Critical Components for Change Activation:
  1. No accountability or incentive system exists to activate change because addressing systemic racism is not an institutional priority.
  2. Institutional focus shifts to building coalitions and strategic relationships
  3. Accountability for injustice exists in moderate measurements (come and go)
  4. Leaders create stable accountability systems and hold other leaders accountable for their actions in promoting racial justice.



Stages of  
Diversity Plan  
Development  
for  
Addressing  
Systemic  
Racism

# Diversity Committees, Commissions, and Task Forces



**Diversity  
Committees  
represent an  
institutions  
commitment to  
strategic diversity  
planning**



**They are a critical  
component to an  
institution's diversity  
infrastructure &  
excellence.**



**Diversity committees  
refer to  
commissions,  
councils, task forces,  
and actions groups –  
all of which work  
together towards  
action & change.**

An Organizing  
Framework for  
Setting Up a  
Diversity  
Committee for  
Addressing  
Systemic Racism  
(4 Parts)



Defining Diversity Initiatives for Systemic Racism



Committee Scope



Committee Role Responsibility



Membership

# Organizing Framework for Setting Up a Diversity Committee on Race

- Defining Diversity Efforts to Address Systemic Racism (Part 1):
  1. How is this defined within the context of the committee's work?
    - Educating staff; establishing HR workshops; enhancing hiring; reforming curriculum
  2. Will the committee focus on a particular topic of diversity to Address Systemic Racism or diversity issues broadly speaking?
    - Broad or narrow focus?



# Organizing Framework for Setting Up a Diversity Committee Addressing Systemic Racism

- Committee Scope (Part 2):
  1. Does the committee operate at the student/employee/trainee level or administrative/senior leadership level?
  2. Does the committee operate across a combination of levels?
  3. Will the committee focus on a particular area of the institution or as a particular component of the organizational structure?

# Organizing Framework for Setting Up a Diversity Committee on Race

- **Committee Role & Responsibility (Part 3):**
  1. **What is the action objective of the committee?**
    - **Decide whether strategy or implementation will be the focus – or both!**
  2. **If it's a Strategy Focus:**
    - **Draft definition of systemic racism; develop framework to address it; establish benchmarking; create metrics for success; draft recommendations; formally submit proposals to senior leadership.**
  3. **If it's an Implementation Focus:**
    - **Develop workshops, initiatives; monitor diversity implementation efforts**



# Strategic- Focus Diversity Committees on Race



**Strategic Focus** Diversity Committees support the strategic thinking of senior leaders on race.



They focus on developing unique opportunities by enabling creative dialogue among people in the institution who can effect change;



They foster guided assumptions about how the institution should think about racial matters.



They define fundamental assumptions and challenge conventional thinking about systemic racism.

# Implementation - Focus Diversity Committees on Race



## Organizing Framework for Setting Up a Diversity Committee

- **Membership (Part 4):**

1. Who appoints members? The committee itself or senior leadership?
  - Optimal size is between 10-15 people
2. Is it a shared governance committee?
3. What are the required skills / criteria for the members?
  - Respected and knowledgeable
  - Personal interest in the work
  - Ability to commit
  - Brings a skillset
  - Experienced & good track record in leading organizational change / major initiative
4. Who will serve as Chair?



# Key Recommendations for Successful Diversity Committees Addressing Systemic Racism

- Ensure the Committee has a clear understanding of its mandate from the very beginning:
  1. Strategic Focus or Implementation Role?
- Operate from a data-driven perspective:
  1. Institutional data
  2. Benchmarking opportunities



# Key Recommendations for Successful Diversity Committees Addressing Systemic Racism

## Understand the Limitations of the Committee:

- Can it authorize initiatives or only Recommend them?
- Who issues final decisions in the organization?

## Formulate the Definition of Racial Challenges:

- Will the committee work on racial issues broadly or only through the lens of a particular institution?

# Key Recommendations for Successful Diversity Committees Addressing Systemic Racism



## **Develop a Clear Understanding of Current Capacity/History on Race:**

Begin by reviewing the institution's current data in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions of racial diversity & race relations at the institution



## **Gather Feedback from the Organization:**

Send out surveys (optional)

Gather individual feedback (critical)

# Key Recommendations for Successful Diversity Committees Addressing Systemic Racism

Align the Committee's overall agenda with the institution's strategic agenda:

- Develop a clear picture of the institution's top priorities for the year
- Then, determine how to tie the committee's goals to the institution's goals as articulated by senior leadership.

Prioritize the Committee's Work:

- Use the information gathered to prioritize and implement the work of the committee
- By doing this, the committee may discern which goals and initiatives are most likely to be embraced first and in which sequence.

# Key Recommendations for Successful Diversity Committees Addressing Systemic Racism

## Create

### Create a Culture of Accountability for Committee Members:

- Set a regular meeting schedule for the entire year
- Incorporate an attendance policy
- Assign clear responsibilities
- Set policies for promoting communication and creating accountability



## Establish

### Establish a Budget and Staffing appropriate to Deliver the Work:

- At a minimum, include a budget for a room, simple refreshments, A/V equipment, and other physical supports (phone; computer).
- Support staff to help facilitate the work in ways such as taking minutes, processing requests, following up on correspondence, and other matters related to committee projects.

# Strategic Diversity Leadership & Addressing Racial Challenges in Cities

## Takeaways:

- The Perfect Storm Factors
- The 5 Dimensions of Strategic Diversity Leadership to address racial challenges (Org; structural; political; symbolic; collegial)
- Establishing a Diversity plan with Accountability (stages)
- Setting up a Committee/Task force & their Framework
- Recommendations for successful diversity committees

