

Advancing Diversity and Inclusion: A Framework for Organisational Progress



#frb #modernwisdom #EX #diversity

Abstract

This discussion paper encapsulates the insights and reflections stemming from a recent exploration session conducted by the FRB (Fellowship of Responsible Business) on diversity and inclusion.

The session delved into the multifaceted aspects of diversity, acknowledging its depth beyond visible attributes, the challenges in delivering quantifiable change and the evolving landscape of employee branding. The paper aims to distil key takeaways, propose considerations for future discussions, and provide a framework for organisations seeking to advance their commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Introduction

Diversity and inclusion are not mere buzzwords but imperative elements for organisational success. The FRB session underscored the significance of understanding diverse perspectives and fostering empathy, recognising that true diversity extends beyond surface attributes.

Defining diversity

This paper advocates for a comprehensive understanding of diversity that goes beyond physical attributes. It raises critical questions about the correlation between diversity of thought and physical attributes, and whether diversity, even in thought, can lead to increased performance but also disharmony. The exploration of these questions can pave the way for quantifying and assessing diversity in a more nuanced manner.

The Role of Employer Branding

The discussion highlighted the pivotal role of an organisation's brand in attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. The concept of an inside-out approach - building the employer brand from within the employee community - was discussed as a strategy to communicate inclusivity authentically to the outside world.

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Challenges and Complications

The complexities inherent in describing individuals and the potential pitfalls of using descriptors that may inadvertently contribute to stereotypes emphasise the need for organisational strategies that, not only encourage individuals to bring their whole selves to work, but also mitigate personal triggers with empathy and emotional intelligence.

Measurement and Impact

Measuring the impact of diversity initiatives on individuals and assessing diversity of thought were deemed crucial. This paper encourages organisations to develop metrics for these assessments and to navigate conflicts by prioritising resolutions that uphold the principles of diversity and inclusion.

Beyond the Workplace

The discussion extended beyond the organisational boundaries to consider the impact of wider societal discrimination on the workforce. It urged organisations to align recruitment and retention strategies with broader societal values and the inherent need to attract individuals who resonate with those values.

Areas for further exploration

In conclusion, three key areas for future exploration were highlighted.

- 1 How do we stimulate a deeper understanding of the depth and breadth of diversity? Understanding the risks and benefits of communications on internal diversity and inclusion efforts. How will this affect the short and long-term performance of the company and its employees?
- 2 Developing behavioural frameworks and activity guides that reduce the complexity of diversity and inclusion. How can this be deployed to enhance inclusivity and reduce friction?
- 3 Explore the juxta position between the harmony/comfort of working with 'people like me' versus disharmony/discomfort of working with 'people NOT like me'. Creativity/innovation in the latter is likely to be much greater, but would we ever agree on anything to get things done!

Conclusion

In a world where diversity is the norm, organisations that embrace and actively cultivate diversity of thought and approach stand to reap significant rewards. This discussion paper offers a framework for organisations to reflect on their diversity and inclusion strategies, fostering a culture where performance thrives on diversity and inclusion. The FRB's insights serve as a compass for organisations navigating the complexities of diversity, and inclusion in an ever-evolving landscape.