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INCLUSION

DIVERSITY, THE NEW WORKPLACE
& THE WILL TO CHANGE

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CHAPTER ONE

CHANGE IS HARD

"When we speak, we are afraid our words will not be heard or welcomed. But when we are silent, we are still afraid. So it is better to speak."

–AUDRE LORDE

Whenever I talk to a group about change, most people stiffen with worry, concerned about the *kind* of change I might mean. I understand the feeling. Change is vague, seemingly limitless, and it's uncomfortable, even scary, to think that so mething you're familiar with may be at risk of going away, especially for reasons you do not fully understand. This is especially acute if that change could take something—you're not sure what—away from you.

So let me begin by easing the tension. When we talk about "change" relative to diversity and inclusion, we're talking about something as simple and obvious as how our workplaces adapt to the opportunities and challenges current and incoming employees encounter every day in their work and lives. This is the basic equation of what makes workplaces, well, "work." While it might be simple and obvious as a focus, unfortunately we don't do it very well. This book will lay out the reasons for that and the many available paths forward toward change.

Regardless, to avoid becoming obsolete, our workplaces and business practices must evolve alongside society and its prevailing culture. We have no choice. So *change*, in not only the conceptual sense but from a practical point of view, is not only beneficial to a company's success; it's vital. As we say, change is the only constant—or another favorite: change or die.

Where we initiate change matters, and I'll share constructive and creative ways to begin your organization's diversity and inclusion journey later in the book. But for change at work to begin, we first have to understand what the conversation about diversity and inclusion is, right now, in the current day. Because of our work, and the sheer number of corporate leaders and employees we speak with every day, we sit at the eye of the storm—and these days, it's nearing a Category 5.

Those of us who've spent any time in corporate America are likely familiar with the dreaded "diversity training" as epitomized in a now-famous episode of the show, *The Office*. We know the drill: a brief lecture given by obligation or compliance, followed by uninspired and limited policy changes, executed by a beleaguered and bewildered management team, and then inflicted on a begrudging workforce. Let the collective eye rolling begin.

If I had believed that organizational change began and ended with such trainings, I would never have felt inspired to join the ranks of people who specialize in the reinvention of the workplace. What *The Office* episode *does* show well is discomfort—to hilarious effect—and discomfort plays a big role in change. As we said earlier, we spend our lives avoiding discomfort—it's only human. But organizations and people need a nudge—and more often a strong push—to change behaviors, to think differently about the cultural norms to which they've grown accustomed. In today's fast-changing world, organiza-

tional leaders will need to do some fresh soul searching, reevaluating much of what they've built their leadership identities upon—as well as see other people differently, more deeply, and more accurately— and most importantly, how they *want* to be seen. We will need to acknowledge our own relative privileges or access to opportunities not available to others and be a part of leveling that inequality in the workplace. A change will not occur on its own, and if it does, but it wasn't planned or is forced, there is the potential for lasting collateral damage—not just in terms of morale from a tone-deaf leadership team, but in real business bottom-line terms, too.

> We will need to acknowledge our own relative privileges or access to opportunities not available to others and be a part of leveling that inequality in the workplace.

The conversation about the haves and the have nots at work can be off-putting to some, especially without proper context. It is uncomfortable to acknowledge that we all have some responsibility for the systems we labor in when their flaws are pointed out— sometimes, very publically. But understand that we're in it together. All of us. Each and every one of us struggles to resolve the riddle of what the workplace and our careers seem to demand and what we deeply desire for ourselves. Exploring this apparent dichotomy is central to the work of diversity and inclusion. That's why we first need to understand what the current changes impacting the workplace are, and why we can't afford to ignore them, before we can address them head-on.

Thankfully, we have a new tool at our disposal to spot some of these changing opportunities and challenges in real time. Social media has created a profound shift in how we engage with one another, as well as how many people see the world around them, often for the first time. Instead of digesting the image presented to us, we can peek into the actual reality. And once you see that reality, it is hard to "unsee" or "unknow" it. People may not be any quicker to address an injustice or an inequity than they were years ago, but with tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Snapchat, mobile-phone cameras, and blogs, a broader community can be reached, and inequity becomes harder to hide or ignore. Our actions—and importantly, inactions, especially as leaders—are there for all to see. On the plus side, connecting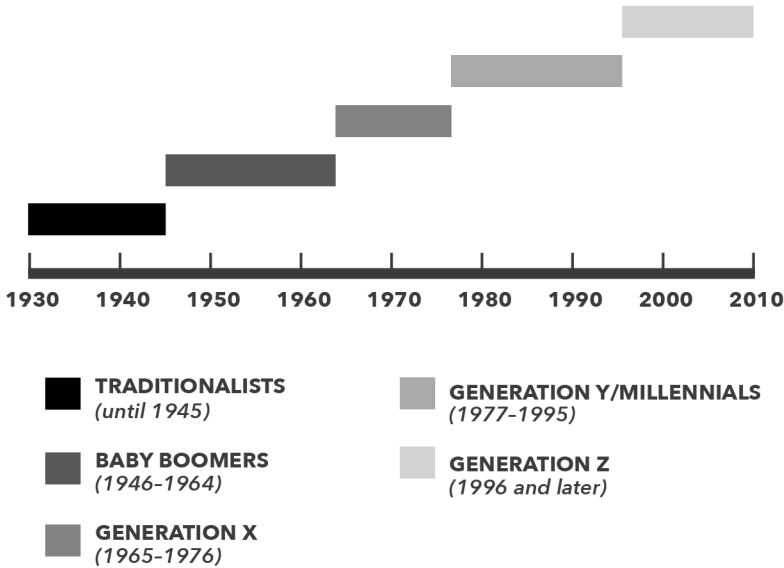 with our *affinity* and exploring common challenges together has become easier than ever, and we've seen just how quickly change can result from these connections and mobilizations in the global news arena—for good and for bad.

> Our actions–and importantly, inactions, especially as leaders– are there for all to see.

A larger but connected trend is the democratization of decision making as a society. We see this in the way people crowdsource purchasing decisions, evaluate an employer before interviewing or taking a job, and in the way most of us leverage social media. The individual is growing in knowledge, empowerment, and authority, while at the same time our organizational hierarchies are stuck in the 1950s. Younger generations are challenging traditional hierarchies by questioning whether the "senior" person is automatically deserving of respect or assumed to be knowledgeable, just because of where that person's name appears on the organizational chart. They want

to know the "why" behind everything, and they want to know the leader as a "full" person—who doesn't just get a pass because of an impressive title. Many leaders I work with seem to not be aware of this expectation, or they are hoping that it dissipates as incoming talent matures and becomes "just like everyone else, with mortgages, kids, and responsibility." Not so fast.

If I can take a little generational credit, this democratic shift has its roots in the disenchantment of generation X (the generation born between approximately 1965 and 1984)—coming of age in the 1980s—and how disaffected we were, losing faith in institutions, starting to view authority with a critical eye, and experiencing the lack of employer loyalty firsthand as we watched its effect on our parents' safety nets and lifetime employment and job security. We were the first to see our mothers in the workforce in substantive numbers and to see divorce rates skyrocket, too. For the millennials, often referred to as generation Y (the generation born between approximately 1975 and 2004),[1] the trend toward autonomy, meaning, purpose, and being embraced for who they are feels like a strong reaction to the generation before them. Their self-awareness and validation began with their doting parents and continues into their present workplace. Although their wants and needs might be criticized as entitlement, it behooves every employer to heed this message: if you value me, then invest in me, and see all of me, so I can do my best work for you. Whatever our stereotypes about this newest generation in the workforce, this is a powerful equation to consider.

GENERATIONS BY BIRTH YEAR

1930 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010

TRADITIONALISTS
(until 1945)

BABY BOOMERS
(1946–1964)

GENERATION X
(1965–1976)

GENERATION Y/MILLENNIALS
(1977–1995)

GENERATION Z
(1996 and later)

Note: There is some disagreement about birth year ranges for the Millennial and Generation Y cohort(s); we have consulted the following: http://genhq.com/faq-info-about-generations/. For more information on the various generations, please see: http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/03/here-is-when-each-generation-begins-and-ends-according-to-facts/359589/.

The solidarity and collective energy of workplace cohorts finding each other in the darkness; discovering their collective voice; and influencing their organizations toward greater health, vitality, and yes, innovation, is something we witness on a daily basis in our work. The courage we see in our clients, and in so many employees, is exhilarating and props up our faith. But the individual change maker—that brave soul who stands up—still plays the most pivotal role in triggering change. If that person speaks from the heart and backs it up with action, one move can cause a landslide.

A SPARK IN THE FIRE: HOW ONE MAN BROUGHT CHANGE TO TWITTER

In the fall of 2015, Leslie Miley, a former engineering manager at Twitter, wrote a blog post explaining his decision to leave one of the world's most revered tech companies. While some organizational restructuring hastened the tough call, Miley claimed his departure ultimately hinged on the social media giant's poor response to diversity issues, specifically those revolving around its hiring practices and the low representation of black[2] and Hispanic workers in its workforce.[3]

The only black engineer in a leadership position quitting Twitter over diversity issues seemed ready-made for headlines. And it was. The revelation rang loud and wide, creating ripples of raised eyebrows and difficult questions across the tech world and beyond. How bad would an experience need to be to justify quitting a job that most in your field would do anything to have? How important must the issue be to pass on a healthy severance package *just so you could talk about it*? And even more puzzling, how could a company so publicly supportive of diversity and social causes struggle with the same issue, in its own hallways?

At the time, Twitter was a company with "#BlackLivesMatter" literally painted on the walls of its San Francisco headquarters. It hosted large events advocating for race and gender equality. It took pride in creating a platform where voiceless communities could gather and share ideas that facilitated social and political change all around the world. If there was a group speaking loudly about diversity and equality, Twitter was likely to be holding its microphone.

With Miley's post came a deluge of stats and revelations that painted an unexpected image of the hip, young company worth billions: 30 percent of Twitter's users were black or Hispanic, yet black and Hispanic workers accounted for only 6 percent of their

workforce, (technical and nontechnical roles combined).[4] Following his exit, Miley stated that Twitter "no longer has any managers, directors, or VPs of color in engineering or product management."[5] While it wasn't a declaration of outright racism, Miley's departure was evidence of a large racial gap that Twitter seemed either unaware of or unsure how to address.

THE VIRAL EFFECT

A company best known for innovation and disruption, Twitter was thrown off balance by Miley's accusations. A company that worked to cultivate corporate transparency as well as social empowerment found itself fumbling both of these mission-critical balls in front of all its constituencies and stakeholders, and the irony was too much to ignore. Within days, Miley's post went viral on social media and news outlets, even on the scrolling feeds of Twitter itself. The more the story reverberated throughout the media industry, the more we learned about what had gone wrong and how common Twitter's challenges were across the entirety of Silicon Valley.

Prior to his exit, Miley had questioned his bosses on why black and Hispanic engineers were so underrepresented, and they had agreed to look into the disparity. An investigation into hiring data traced the problem to a low percentage of black and Hispanic talent in Twitter's hiring pipeline.

When all roads lead back to blaming the pipeline—as they often do in my experience—most managers consider the case closed, saying with a shrug that it's outside of their span of influence. The refrain is that diverse talent is hard—nay, impossible—to find, especially for technical roles. In our data-driven world, and especially for technology companies, we expect numbers and the data to hold all

the answers, so when certain affinities are missing from the pipeline, it's not the company's fault that there is a systemic issue, right?

The answer, perhaps, lies buried beneath our silence, as we all instinctively avoid uncomfortable, potentially difficult conversations about problems that are nuanced and complex and have many sources. In an interview with NPR in November 2015, Miley gives voice to a palpable concern about how corporations begin, or don't begin, those conversations: "[T]he moment you say 'diversity,' I think a lot of people think you're calling them racist or a bigot. They automatically go on the defensive, or they just don't want to have the conversation."[6] We never even get started on the path.

I have experienced this reaction myself and believe we need to enter these conversations in a radically different way, including *radically different stakeholders* in those conversations. If we spend all of our time saying, "show me the data" and then decide it's not our fault, we are missing a key accountability of leadership, which is of course—you guessed it—to lead. To ask the tough questions. To put ourselves in the role of the learner, over and over again, and acknowledge there is much we don't know. To lead through service to others.

> [T]he moment you say 'diversity,' I think a lot of people think you're calling them racist or a bigot. They automatically go on the defensive, or they just don't want to have the conversation.

THE RISING AWARENESS OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND MICROINEQUITIES AT WORK (AGAIN)

I say "again" because many of us have been studying and discussing bias in the workplace of course for years, but the topic is experiencing a resurgence at the moment, and with a twist. Miley's experience at Twitter may seem less dramatic when compared to past stories of seemingly more overt discrimination, but what makes his experience so important to contemporary society lies much farther below the surface. Twitter playing a starring role couldn't have been cast more perfectly, a fact that helped make Miley's story that much more compelling for viral consumption. A tech giant of the digital age revealing its own struggles was simply too momentous for the public to ignore. The story elucidates not only many of the ways in which a company's relationship to the public is changing through transparency and accountability but also the challenges of beginning to implement a powerful and transformational diversity and inclusion strategy that connects the workforce to the workplace, to the marketplace, and back again, in one inclusive ecosystem.

While Miley was implying Twitter had some particular challenges with race, he was doing it in a way most had never seen before. The disparity in Twitter's diversity numbers had a lot more to do with systemic issues and practices—such as the relative weight given to schools attended, credentials, individual merit, and the lack of focus on creating an environment of inclusion in its work culture—than it did a conscious effort to exclude black and Hispanic employees. Miley raised the point that discrimination today is often an *unconscious act*, the result of how we tend to believe that the norms and experiences of our own social group—whether defined by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or some other

qualifier—are, or should be, the same for every other social group. And the realization that they are radically different.

These misperceptions are more formally known as ***unconscious bias***, and it is hard-wired in all of us. In fact, it's one of the main reasons why fostering change in the workplace is so challenging, because many of us aren't aware there's a problem, especially if things have been relatively easier for us. This is how we are unconscious. If we're white, male, and maybe, heterosexual—and we consider ourselves progressive people too—it might not have crossed our minds that our old friend bias is still around and playing a detrimental role in a work environment we assume to be a meritocracy.

When we are missing a piece of information, when we are acting quickly, talking fast or maybe too much, or hiring quickly to match our company's growth, we make an assumption that is more informed by our own background and experience and our own comfort level than it is on the facts. Not noticing there is a disparity in our workforce or team demographics, we'll naturally gravitate to certain resumes over others, we'll think to promote certain folks over others, and we'll build teams that look like us. And then when we look around and see that our workforce doesn't represent our world, we'll blame schools, the educational system, or some other external factor. We don't like to have our biases pointed out, and it is very tempting to blame "the system."

The occurrence of overtly sexist, racist, and homophobic comments and jokes has decreased in some workplaces, which may be the good news, but today we are experiencing a related but different twist on exclusion: the pernicious ***microinequities*** or ***microaggressions***. The term, minted by Columbia Professor Derald Sue, refers to "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communi-

cate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color."[7] These can apply beyond race and ethnicity and are experienced by many with historically stigmatized identities.

I call this "death by a thousand cuts" in the workplace. For Twitter, even without overt discrimination, the impact on Miley, of subtle oversights, of not being included, of not feeling valued, was the same. After Miley's public declaration, the company had to address a problem that, in the dominant, Euro-centric workplace culture that seems to reign in certain quarters of the business world, we have simplified and dismissed for decades.

Twitter's head of engineering quickly issued an apology and a statement outlining the company's plans to improve its diversity and inclusion mission. Inclusion training courses for employees would now be mandatory. Recruiters would step up their presence at historically black colleges and universities and at Hispanic-serving institutions. Management teams at all levels would begin collecting, and more thoroughly analyzing, data on retention variations between ethnic groups. Twitter made a public commitment to increasing the number of blacks, Hispanics, and women within its workforce.

Fast forward to early 2016, when I found myself presenting on the topic of building more inclusive workplaces to a packed room of lesbian technologists at Twitter's San Francisco headquarters. Jeff Siminoff, the company's new diversity lead and a personal friend, welcomed us with enthusiasm, making a point to tell us that the company was proud to host this growing community and the evolving conversation on **LGBTQ** issues and empowering allies at all levels. So much has improved in the aftermath of Miley's blog and the media scrutiny, including the appointment of Siminoff to the role of overseeing diversity at the company.

His appointment and onboarding though were anything but smooth and touched off another firestorm. Siminoff is a white, albeit gay, *cisgender* man. Those angered by the news of his appointment argued that the decision displayed Twitter's continued resistance to appointing people of color and women to executive positions. In my opinion—and as an organizational change practitioner who happens to be white—this dialogue diminishes an entire community of change makers by implying that leaders of certain identities cannot be effective. At the same time however, I strongly believe passionate discussion is needed on this topic about how critical it is to diversify so many companies' leadership ranks with less-represented talent and how powerful some choices are in sending messages that so many crave—messages that say "you're important" and "we heard you." This appointment might have felt tone-deaf and defeating to some, while at the same time empowering and strategic to others. I'll speak more about the power of allies in later chapters.

We don't need to reduce these dialogues to right or wrong; the goal should be to become fluent in seeing both sides of issues and training ourselves with enough first-person data and research to be aware of our lens and then to look through the lens of others at the exact same information and imagine how it might impact us and others. I find that having a strong opinion on either side is not as useful (although it has created some big names in the diversity space).

Regardless, the Twitter saga is an effective cautionary tale for why companies need to prioritize getting their diversity house in order.

THE AGE OF DATA TRANSPARENCY

Twitter isn't the only company to experience the whiplash of a hyperconnected global society. It has rattled entire industries of all kinds, and a surge of action has occurred as companies try to field

the myriad of issues arising from total mismatches between their internal employee demographics and the demographics of the clients or customers they depend on. Transparency is making this disparity more and more difficult to hide.

If you've tuned in to the news in the last year or two, you've likely witnessed technology companies issuing a deluge of workforce data. Thanks in large part to social media pressure and callouts by so many to fix the problem, and the rising preeminence of younger workers who are the most vocal generation in decades, we now live in an age where companies are revealing closely held company information as a sort of "throwing up of hands" at the problem and a public plea for help in addressing seemingly insurmountable diversity challenges ("It's the pipeline!"). The spark that started it all is widely considered to be Tracy Chou, a twenty-seven-year-old coder at Pinterest who, in 2013, took the simple but provocative step of uploading a spreadsheet—to the code-sharing platform Github—that companies could use as a template to make public the number of female engineers in their ranks. Chou didn't intend to be an activist, but it was a shot heard throughout the Valley.

Female employees at Facebook had increased one percent globally in a year, while there was no change in the numbers of black and Hispanic employees.

And what has been the reaction, and more importantly, the progress since all of this supposed transparency? Some good news is that companies are now in the routine of sharing their demographics; the bad news is that the numbers haven't changed since the sharing, despite efforts and a public focus on the issues. Facebook reported that female employees at Facebook had increased

one percent globally in a year, while there was no change in the numbers of black and Hispanic employees.[8] So much for the power of transparency.

The company attributed their recruitment challenges to the early education system and to how children are prepared for jobs in Silicon Valley; the company is directing its energy now toward launching a five-year $15 million partnership with Code.org to provide students opportunities to learn computer science and programming skills, much of it going toward training K-12 teachers so that they in turn can instruct kids.

A positive step, to be sure. Let's explore the pluses and minuses of other actions, and inactions, a bit further.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: UNCONSCIOUS BIAS TRAINING

Many organizations responded to the data release by attempting to increase understanding of how we naturally gravitate to people like ourselves (seeking comfort, of course) and how organizations have shaped themselves around this unchecked tendency, to the detriment of our team effectiveness and innovation. The fact that demographic disparities haven't been top of mind for most organizations has led to the incredible homogeneity we see in the top layers of organizational leadership and, in some companies, throughout all layers of the organizational hierarchy.

Because specifically technology companies love data and science, but almost all *C-suite* and executive leaders love it just as much, the reaction to these systemic problems has been largely focused on training on unconscious bias. There exists a lot of research on the topic; therefore, if the argument is scientifically based, people should

be convinced, and maybe we can all move on. Training is just one of many change tools, and clearly more is needed to shift the numbers.

Facebook isn't alone. An industry focus is helpful when looking at this topic, and certain fields are indeed especially challenged on the diversity front. US Census data show that blacks, Hispanics, and women are underrepresented in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). For example, blacks and Hispanics combined made up 26 percent of the total US workforce in 2011, but their share of STEM occupations was only 13 percent.[9] Self-reported demographic data from many of the Silicon Valley tech firms reflects similar numbers. In October 2015, Airbnb shared that its workforce is 54 percent male, 63 percent white, 7 percent Hispanic/Latino, and 3 percent black. *USA Today* reported in March 2016, "In major Silicon Valley tech companies, men greatly outnumber women, accounting for as much as 70 percent of the workforce."[10]

When Google released its diversity data in 2014, Stanford University's Vivek Wadhwa said, "Frankly, Silicon Valley is a boys' club. It's like a frat club run wild . . . They don't understand why they have to be inclusive . . . And this is why it's important for companies like Google to be at the forefront of change, and encouraging women to join them . . . That could cause dramatic change within five years if they started focusing on it today . . . this is a really, really significant announcement that they have made." And Laszlo Bock, Google's SVP, People Operations, shared these thoughts following the release of their data: "One big thing is unconscious bias and diversity. In the privileged strata we occupy as Fortune 500 and global Fortune 1000 companies, we don't see a lot of overt sexism, racism, or homophobia, but you do see discrimination, and it's an outcome of people unconsciously being biased against one another."[11]

But inequity is not limited to tech. In January 2016, Bono was tweeting from the World Economic Forum in Davos, expressing the need for greater gender parity there. Only about 18 percent of the participants at Davos are women. Barri Rafferty, CEO of Ketchum North Americas, a PR firm, told *Fortune* in January 2015 that she was repeatedly mistaken for an attendee's wife.[12]

In January 2016, across industries, the Center for American Progress reported that fewer than 20 percent of all C-suite executives and 4.6 percent of CEOs are women at Standard & Poor 500 companies. "The lowest number of women in leadership roles are in the consumer products, transportation services, computer software, technology, chemicals, energy and utilities, construction, industrial manufacturing, and automotive and transport industries," writes Adrienne Selko in *Industry Week*.[13] That's a lot of industries in need of understanding why minorities are so underrepresented in leadership roles.

PROFILING CHANGE: A LOOK AT THE NUMBERS

While 13.2 percent of the US population is black, according to the Census Bureau, as of this writing, there are only *five* black CEOs at the country's five hundred largest companies: Kenneth Chenault of American Express, Delphi's Rodney O'Neal, Merck's Kenneth Frazier, Carnival's Arnold W. Donald, and Ursula Burns of Xerox.[14] This number is about to change and not in the right direction. Burns, the first black woman to run a Fortune 500 company, will step down following a split planned later in 2016. With her departure, there will be no black women heading a Fortune 500 company. There are only twenty-one female CEOs on the list, down from twenty-four last year.

In 2015, Hispanics/Latinos comprised 17 percent of the US population; there were nine Hispanic CEOs at Fortune 500 companies. As of this writing, there are ten Asian American CEOs in the Fortune 500, while Asians comprised 5.6 percent of the population. Tim Cook at Apple is the first, and currently only, openly gay Fortune 500 CEO.[15]

In January 2016, Richard Felloni, writing for *Business Insider*, observed the off-balance diversity at major companies, comparing the lagging numbers with the benefits that more level rates of diversity add to the company's competitive advantage. "Studies show that diverse organizations actually perform better than homogeneous ones, and so by changing the way we approach diversity, we are making ourselves a more competitive company."[16] Indeed, according to a 2015 McKinsey report, *Why Diversity Matters*:

> In the United States, there is a linear relationship between racial and ethnic diversity and better financial performance: for every 10 percent increase in racial and ethnic diversity on the senior-executive team, earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rise 0.8 percent.

McKinsey found that companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians, and those in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15 percent more likely.[17]

Cristian Deszö of the University of Maryland and David Ross of Columbia University studied the effect of gender diversity on the top firms in S&P's Composite 1500 list, a group designed to reflect the overall US equity market. First, they examined the size and gender composition of firms' top management teams from 1992 through 2006. Then they looked at the financial performance of the firms. In

their words, they found that, on average, "female representation in top management leads to an increase of $42 million in firm value."[18]

In order to reach our innovative potential as employers, producers of new goods and technologies, and corporate citizens, we have to effect some profound change in addressing our gaps. That responsibility doesn't fall on any one group; change is going to challenge all of us.

LESSONS LEARNED: CHANGE IN SILICON VALLEY

Many of the major tech companies, having shared their diversity data from late 2014 to early 2016 and now making it a regular reporting activity, are stepping up their diversity and inclusion efforts following the flood of media scrutiny.[19] They've created jobs, departments, and initiatives dedicated to increasing their diverse talent and cultivating inclusion in their workplaces.

- In 2015, Intel unveiled a five-year, $300 million diversity program to build a workforce that mirrors the level of diversity among tech graduates.[20] CEO Brian Krzanich said the company is "missing opportunities" because its workforce doesn't represent the population.

- Apple has awarded scholarships to young developers from forty-one different countries in the past year. The company's website says, "We believe the more perspectives we have, the more innovative and powerful apps can be." In 2015, in the United States, nearly 50 percent of Apple's new hires were women, black, Hispanic, or Native American.[21]

- Facebook overhauled its unconscious bias training in February 2015, posting a one-hour version online in

July 2015. "It's best to start by having individuals reach a personal understanding of their possible biases and then have them work together through real world examples," shares Maxine Williams, global head of diversity at Facebook. "We look at our internal surveys: Is the hiring rate increasing? Are employees indicating that they feel connected and that they feel a sense of belonging?"[22] TechPrep is an online resource hub that Facebook launched in partnership with McKinsey in October 2015, designed to welcome underrepresented minorities to computer science.[23] Facebook University creates internships to cultivate underrepresented populations.

- In January 2016, Pinterest recruited Candice Morgan, who worked for nearly a decade at nonprofit Catalyst Inc., where she advised companies across industries on how to create more inclusive cultures.[24]

- Judith Williams, Google's global diversity and inclusion programs manager, started at Dropbox in October 2015.

These may all be small steps, but they are significant. Creating diversity officer positions in early-stage, fast-growth companies whose sole focus is driving more diverse and inclusive work-places—and leveraging talented leaders who've achieved success elsewhere in the filling of these positions—is a wise move. As we've discussed, change doesn't just happen, especially on the uncomfortable (for many) topic of diversity; proactive, consistent, and relentless focus is needed in the form of a team who's accountable for progress and in the form of executive leadership who take a stand and make real investments.

The search for solutions to workplace inequities may get harder—and more costly—before it gets easier. With so many deeply ingrained conventions that need to be addressed before inclusion can be successful, we have to trace the origins of existing problems to discover their solutions. That search will lead deep into history, back to our fundamental management orthodoxies and, ultimately, to our deep challenges with equality as a country.

ENGAGING THE WHOLE WORKER

The need for change surfaces just about everywhere in an organization, if you know where to look. We poll employees endlessly about their levels of engagement and are becoming increasingly convinced that workplace cultures influence everything from recruitment to retention to the very value of brands worldwide. It is much harder to please shareholders or investors with your results when the vast *majority* of your workforce would describe themselves as disengaged.

A disengaged workforce is not an innovative one, as innovative behaviors and actions spring from minds that are open, from people who feel their voice is heard and respected and who trust their colleagues. According to a 2013 Gallup poll measuring employee engagement in the workplace, a meager 13 percent of employees across 142 countries worldwide report feeling engaged in their jobs—that is, they are emotionally invested in and focused on creating value for their organizations every day.[25] That

> It is much harder to please shareholders or investors with your results when the vast majority of your workforce would describe themselves as disengaged.

means a whopping 87 percent are focused on something else. What do you imagine that is costing an organization's bottom line?

I know from my own experiences, as both an employee in corporate America and as a consultant, that so many employees are withholding that valuable "discretionary effort" they *could* bring to work but don't, or won't, *if* they don't feel Welcomed, Valued, Respected, and Heard[SM]. Those of us who don't feel commitment take that energy elsewhere, and while our performance is diminished and we may be harming our careers, the company loses the most. Put very simply, consider the following:

- Engaged employees are the ones who are most likely to drive innovation, growth, and revenue that their companies desperately need.

- Actively disengaged employees continue to outnumber engaged employees by nearly two to one.

We'll let you do the math.

Companies lose great employees like Leslie Miley, who walk off the job rather than contend with a hostile or indifferent corporate culture. Many like Miley grow weary of expecting or hoping for change. "Companies turn over great employees because they're not organizationally strong enough to support rapid development within their ranks. In many cases, that is a recipe for discontinuity in service and product offerings as well as disloyalty in the ranks," shares Brendan Burke, director at Headwaters.[26]

Striving to be more transparent about diversity and inclusion is a good first step, but the road to lasting and deep culture change requires time and commitment. If transparency is followed by inaction, or a lack of visible attention (which amounts to the same thing), a slow but toxic fire can be kindled. This window of time

between measurement, announcements, and real action is very important. The brownie points companies get for sharing their flaws openly last for a brief time, and then accountability for action kicks in. If there isn't visible, sustained, and meaningful action by leadership, it can almost make it worse to have discussed challenges—and made in the end false promises—in the first place.

We consult to a regional bank that contacted us because they had learned they were close to losing a huge bid—an existing client relationship—partially because they had without noticing sent an all-white and all-male team to the sales meetings. In giving the feedback to the bank, the potential buyer also shared that it was disturbing to walk through the halls of the bank and notice the lack of visible diversity. As we scrambled to put the bank's first ever diversity strategy together so they could at the very least discuss their awareness of their challenges and their road map for change, they ultimately lost the deal. Their prospective client represented a diverse group of constituents who needed to feel confident that their banking partner would understand their world. This experience was a huge wake-up call for the bank. I often say to my clients, "If you think you haven't lost a bid or a relationship at least in part because of diversity metrics, you're probably wrong—it's just that nobody has had the courage to give you the honest feedback."

As we know, profound and lasting organizational change toward more diverse and inclusive cultures can be very hard to get right. Training has, historically, been a go-to solution for culture change, but it's only one tool in what needs to be a much larger and multifaceted arsenal, as we point out above. And when not handled in the right way, it can be counterproductive, which demonstrates the delicacy of this topic and the issues that it raises for people. A January 2016 article in the *Harvard Business Review* stated, "The most

commonly used diversity programs do little to increase representation of minorities and women. A longitudinal study of over seven hundred US companies found that implementing diversity training programs has little positive effect and may even *decrease* representation of black women."[27]

The rhetoric of diversity that sometimes shows up in traditional diversity training can result in inaccurate and counterproductive beliefs. In a recent experiment, it was determined that some training not only makes white men believe that women and minorities are being treated fairly—whether that's true or not—but it also makes them more likely to believe that they themselves are being treated unfairly.[28]

Sadly, this type of data is commonly used to refute the usefulness of training. I would argue that training design and approach matter enormously; our firm has had great success leading programs that are properly customized and buttressed by the right change-management practices that focus on organizational change and the role of the leader in taking concrete steps to lead the conversation about inclusion. We are emphatic about the fact that no training exists in a vacuum. Without understanding the pros and cons of a company's prevailing culture, workforce engagement, workplace dynamics, and the potential impact a younger, increasingly diverse talent pool will have on all of it, many traditional diversity training seminars *will* feel outdated, out of touch, and worst of all, insincere.

As a Gen-Xer specialist in the space, I've been able to witness firsthand how today's company leadership who largely hail from the baby boomer generation is failing to connect with today's workforce, despite good intentions. It's very difficult for us to step outside our worldviews, and yet step outside them we must. Organizations are failing to tap into the wide variety of values, beliefs, and needs

of the multiple generations in the workplace as they update their approaches. For example, the failure to develop internal culture and workforce strategies alongside societal changes has severely diminished traditional companies' success in recruiting talent and engaging new and existing workers rattled by the transition to corporate life and the bureaucracy. If a company is unable to engage today's workforce, it's most likely the result of not developing new strategies capable of accommodating the needs and wants of a new age. Considering the overwhelming number of technological, economic, social, and generational changes worldwide just within the last two decades, it's understandable that large companies are struggling to pivot with the impact, but it's not excusable.

Part of the work of inclusion is helping those already in the workforce to feel safe bringing more of themselves to work, versus what they have done historically, such as downplaying parts of themselves for purposes of assimilation. Companies need every single person's knowledge, skills, and overall input, but employees won't bring all of this unless there is a trusting relationship between employer and employee. Where and how and why a company begins to take steps toward this looks different for every company, which we'll discuss in the next chapter. What's most important is to start—somewhere.