



The Unbiased Playbook

Actionable tactics for creating stronger teams
and faster growth through diversity

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Introduction

2020 will go down in history as the year when the world finally sat up and took notice of diversity. It was the year that Black Lives Mattered. That talk turned to action.

At Revenue Collective, we are a community of business leaders. We have a platform to affect change. So, it's time for us to stand up and be counted.

Our event, The Unbiased Playbook, was the result of months of planning. We reached out to some of Europe's foremost experts on diversity in business and invited them to speak. We were privileged to have a mix of academics, writers, business leaders and more—all with their unique angle on diversity.

The event itself was a great success, with hundreds of people watching from across the globe. The feedback we have received has been amazing and humbling. If the goal was to make people think, we certainly succeeded.

In this eBook, we've condensed the day of talks into a series of actionable tips you can use today to move your business in the right direction. Increasing diversity in your teams isn't just 'the right thing to do,' it is proven to make a demonstrable difference to your performance too.

We hope you enjoy reading this eBook and that you use it to promote greater inclusion, equity and belonging wherever you can.

Tom Glason, Pete Crosby, and André Bressel

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Why diversity matters, now

CONTRIBUTOR



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Dr. Shola Mos-Shogbamimu is a lawyer, activist, social entrepreneur and author. She is the founder of the Women in Leadership publication and the author of [‘This is Why I Resist’](#).

Dr. Shola has taught intersectional feminism to female refugees and asylum seekers. She scrutinises Government policy from a gender, diversity and inclusion perspective. She also appears regularly on Sky News and is a terrific public speaker, as we found out.

Dr. Shola explained, why, now more than ever, leaders need to take the initiative on diversity and inclusion.



ACTIONABLE TIPS

Now is the time

It’s 2021, and the whole world is talking about diversity and inclusion. Race has always existed, but now it’s amplified.

From Harry and Meghan to the COVID-19 pandemic and its discriminatory impact on Black people and ethnic minorities, to the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement and beyond, if you’re not talking about race, people will want to know why. In and out of the workplace, it is time to talk about race, then act on what you find out.

‘For the last decade, talking about race was perceived as not polite. We cannot be silent anymore. Black people don’t just forget that wrong is wrong.’

Talk to your team about race

If you are a leader and you haven't had an open conversation with your workforce about race yet, do it now.



Sure, it's hard, it's awkward and you might hear some things you don't want to – but not having the conversation is much worse than actually having it.

Today, Black people in your workforce and their allies are talking. They are being more open about how they feel and they are pointing out injustices when they see them. As a leader, you need to show them that you are listening.

Get your teams together and challenge each other to talk frankly about race and the feelings it stirs up. Take the process seriously and use it as a springboard to try and make things better.

Do what it takes to make things better

'It's not a company that makes a decision. It's a person.'

The people you work with are the best source of information on what needs to be done. After your talk with your teams, it's likely that a lot of matters will have been raised. But, it is not enough to just talk about race—it has to lead to action.

Address every example that your team brings to you, whether it's around hiring, bias, workplace culture or anything else. If it means you need to attend courses or educate your workforce in other ways, make it happen.

Inequality in the workplace needs to end now.

You can fight racism outside the workplace, too

The fact is, if someone is racist or biased against people of other races in the workplace, they're probably like that in everything else they do, too.

[cont'd on next page](#)

Remember the story of Amy Cooper, the investment banker who called the police on a Black man while walking her dog in New York's Central Park? The same person you see weaponising their white privilege in Central Park is the same person who acts with prejudice towards her reports in work. The mindset does not change when you step into the office.

Leaders can engage and educate their workforce to make the whole world a better place, not just their office.

You can also talk to people outside of work if you're struggling with initiating conversations with your team. We all worry about making mistakes—run your ideas past someone you trust first.

There's no such thing as unconscious bias

When someone demonstrates racial bias, discrimination or prejudice in the workplace, we often call it unconscious bias. Unconscious bias does not exist. The bias here is subconscious, not unconscious. The bias was always there. It is just waiting for the right circumstances to trigger it.

As a leader, you need to get to the bottom of your biases (they're in there somewhere) and find a way to improve and evolve your thinking. The way you exercise your privilege may be relatively mild in your mind, but it is exercising privilege nonetheless. It affects the people you are there to inspire.

'It is the job of every single one of us to understand what our biases are and take the necessary steps to ensure that we stop being that way.'

Policies are not enough

You've taken everybody's points on board and drawn up a new set of company policies. They're perfectly drafted, written down and cascaded to your teams. That's great, but your work is not finished. What matters is the outcome of these policies. Do they result in improvements for the people who were affected?

Policies don't change behaviour. What changes behaviour is how you implement them. When something happens and you have to interpret the policy and enforce it accordingly, that's what makes a difference.

A policy without an outcome isn't worth the paper it's written on.

You must push back whenever you hear something negative

If you're oblivious to racial prejudice, or you see it and let it pass, you're not part of the solution; you're part of the problem.

As a leader who is taking their teams on a journey to improve inclusivity, you don't get a day off. It's 24/7/365. It's not a performance—it's life.

Part of the journey will be identifying, understanding and learning from your mistakes. Own your mistakes and fix them visibly.

However, you must still push back whenever you see malicious behaviour. This doesn't just apply to the people under you. Nobody is too important for you to let it slide. If board members, shareholders, or even clients, exhibit racially-biased behaviour, you need to correct them.

'We're in this together. Have each other's backs.'

Speak up

When you speak up on behalf of other people, it shows them that they're not alone. Conversations can be painful but worth having. Right is right.

'Do not pretend it's not your problem. It's everyone's problem. Tell your workforce that you don't want to see them in pain or discriminated against, whether they're male, female, able, disabled, or any protected characteristic.'

Sometimes the bravery of people who speak up for you can surprise you, and teach you things about yourself.

Leaders aren't expected to know everything, however. You probably have numerous questions around race that you need answers to. After all, you don't want to make a mistake and make things worse.

Find someone you feel safe with and talk to them one-on-one. Don't walk on eggshells.



Don't make it about you

When fixing instances of discrimination in your workforce, try to make the issue the centre, not yourself. It might be good for the ego to be the 'white saviour' making the world a better place, but that approach causes more problems than it solves.

Bring your teams on board as you address the issue together. Make the solution come from them, rather than yourself. It helps achieve buy-in, which can be useful later.

If you need to enlist the help of your Black members of staff to help you on your mission, reward them for it. Don't get them to 'perform their trauma' for you as a favour. Make it make sense for them, and make sure something actually gets done.

Plugging the gaps is easier than you think

In many instances, fixing discriminatory practices in your workplace isn't as hard as you think it might be.

If there is a racially discriminatory pay gap in your organisation, just fix it. It's easy for a leader to find out this sort of information. Then, give the people who aren't paid the same as their white colleagues a pay rise.

If HR investigations into allegations of bias aren't getting to the bottom of the matter, find out why and fix it.

You can even start with these low-hanging fruits while you plan long-term solutions and new policies.

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How to initiate a conversation about diversity with your team

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Koby is a software and cloud services veteran with a long track record in the industry – and Barack Obama follows him on Twitter!

ACTIONABLE TIPS

People on your team could be struggling

While there may not be one specific moment of overt discrimination where it all comes to a head, people of colour in your team could be feeling ground down by constant 'low level' problems. For example, continually explaining how to pronounce or spell your name soon becomes tiring.

'The first time I thought, 'Wow, someone at work knows what my name means' was going down to the basement and talking to the Black and Asian people that worked in the post room.' - Asad

It's possible that your team members don't feel like they can talk about it. No one

wants to be labelled as a troublemaker. Plus, there's a long history in business of complaints about racism being ignored or swept under the carpet.

As a leader, your job is to create an environment where it's OK to speak up.



Get race out of HR and into the CEO's office

40% of people who report a racist incident at work get regarded as troublemakers.

40% of managers say they are too busy to prioritise diversity initiatives.

Is that really good enough? It needs to change now.

Diversity and inclusion are usually covered by HR in most businesses. But, it's clear that HR doesn't know how to address it adequately. If people are afraid to speak out about discrimination, something needs to change.

Get your diversity initiatives out of HR and into the CEO's office. Stop box-ticking and take action.

Post-George Floyd, people now know that they want to do something real about inclusion. That kind of change can only come from the top.

Look for the business opportunity

Unlocking inclusivity and creating a better culture isn't just a nice-to-have. There is an undeniable business opportunity there, too. Look for it and find the reality. If you're in a data-led organisation, identify the numbers that help you.

If you need to make the business case for improving diversity, do it. There is nothing wrong with that approach. You don't need to feel dirty!

'The injustices we see today were always grounded in money. We can't uncouple the economic from the moral.' – Asad

The good news is that most CEOs are already doing this. After COVID, inclusivity is the top priority in business right now. The advantages are many, while the consequences of doing nothing could be disastrous.

Don't stop at hiring – change life for the people already there

Hiring for diversity is essential and a great way to start, but you can't end there. You have people already in your company that want to see improvements.

'Ensure diversity and inclusion is felt throughout the whole organisation. It only works if it is in the lifeblood.'
– Marya

Leaders need to get out there and have the difficult conversations.

At Ometria, the CEO set up a town hall meeting. The leadership set the tone, deciding to make themselves vulnerable, admitting where they have made mistakes and encouraging others to do the same.

When it starts at the top, it soon trickles down. But, someone needs to take the first step. Do you have the courage to do something like that in your organisation?

"They take their cues from white culture. They don't understand why they should do things differently. It's not malicious, but it's ingrained. We need to do small things to open the door."

- Koby Amedume

Accelerate the pace of change

Things are changing, but not quickly enough. It shouldn't have taken the high-profile death of another Black man for things to start moving. We now have to make up for lost time. It's no longer enough not to be racist – you have to be anti-racist.

A vital step should be to dismantle the 'old boys club' at the top of your organisation, if one exists. The collection of middle-aged white men that sit at the top of most companies perpetuates the cycle of exclusivity.

'They take their cues from white culture. They don't understand why they should do things differently. It's not malicious, but it's ingrained. We need to do small things to open the door.' - Koby

Get more people of colour in leadership positions as a matter of urgency.

Sweat the small stuff

Microaggressions are a hot topic when talking about diversity. A lot of people think the matters that we talk about are petty, like changing the name of Uncle Ben's rice.

The problem with small things is that they add up to become a big thing.

People of colour do have more important things to worry about than a picture on a packet of rice. Still, when you live day after day without seeing people who look like you reflected in society, you begin to feel ostracised.

Leaders must understand why people may be thinking that way and take steps to address it.

'If every time a salesperson picks up the phone they have to pronounce their name three times or their email address gets misspelt, and the person they're sending it to feels like the product is not for them because of who they are, what does that mean?' - Asad

Push back – even if it's not you that's affected

Too often in the workplace, people of colour feel like they have to adapt to fit in and get where they want to be. This is something that needs to change.

You may be the leader who has educated themselves and engaged with the journey towards improving inclusivity, but everyone else may not be as far ahead as you. If you see something in your organisation that portrays people of colour as different from everyone else, call it out and push back.

The same goes if someone says something inappropriate, even if it is not meant maliciously and there are no people of colour around to hear it. Many times these are old-fashioned phrases, but they are outdated. Be educational, not confrontational.

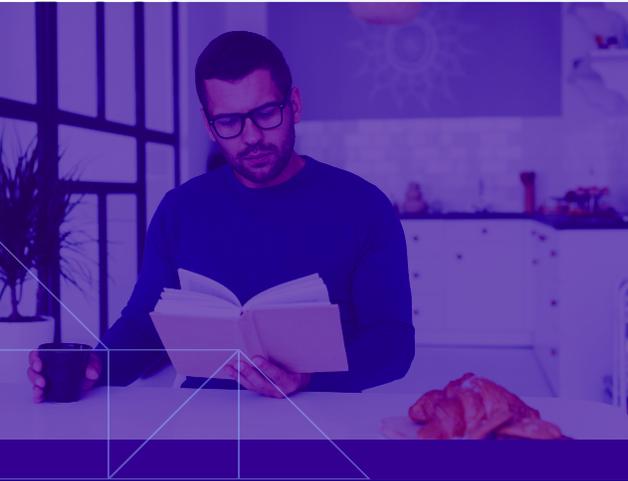
Be prepared for the difficult conversations

Calling people out for discriminatory behaviour isn't easy. It can be awkward and you never quite know what the other person's response is going to be. However, it's worth doing, and it's part of your remit if you're on a mission to improve things.

Be prepared to have these conversations. Be brave. When you initiate these conversations properly, it makes people feel comfortable doing it themselves.

Remember, the upside of having these conversations is a happier, more satisfied workforce, with lower staff churn and more success.

'Put yourself out there. Get outside of your comfort zone, like minorities have to do every day. That's where it starts.' – Marya



Educate yourself

As a leader, you have the responsibility to create positive change in your organisation. However, you may need to create change in yourself first. It starts with you.

If you feel uncomfortable talking about race, you need to get comfortable quickly. If you don't know what angle to approach it from, educate yourself.

Talk to people from different races. Get a different perspective. Find out what kind of things make people feel othered. What things do you sometimes say that aren't acceptable anymore?

There are books you can read, shows on Netflix you can watch. There is no excuse to be ignorant about racial issues in 2021.

'Look in the mirror. Don't just see what you want to see. Understand your personal biases.' – Koby

Educate your teams

At Ometria, the staff came together to draw up a reading list of books that shine a light on racial issues, that it would be useful to read. The leadership team then offered to reimburse anyone who bought anything from the list.

At NICE inContact, the CEO told their team members to actively get involved in the Black Lives Matter movement, if they wanted to. It was a seminal moment for Koby.

What can you do to help your teams understand more about diversity? Think outside the box, as they did at Ometria or NICE inContact.

'You are never too old to learn more about how we can appreciate and respect our different identities.' – Marya

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Understanding otherness

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Pete has been working on diversity and inclusion initiatives for more than ten years. As Chair of the Revenue Collective in Manchester, he is committed to ensuring that nobody working in a Revenue Collective business, experiences otherness of any kind.



Rhoda Abbey

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Yomi Adegoke

Author

Yomi is one of the most influential writers on race and feminism in the UK today. Her book, *Slay In Your Lane*, is already regarded as a classic and is being made into a film by Channel 4.

ACTIONABLE TIPS

Black women are marginalised in (at least) two ways

There has been a lot of talk recently about improving visibility for Black people in the workplace. Before that, the focus was on achieving equality for women. However, there has not been enough to connect these two movements.

While there has been a wide range of books for women in business, such as those by Sheryl Sandberg and Ariana Huffington, there is nothing, no platform, to help Black women navigate the workplace.

Leaders need to bear in mind that Black women in their teams may be feeling marginalised for their colour and gender. Find out, and fix it.

'We were experiencing different versions of sidelining and racism. But there wasn't a book or a platform that acknowledged it.' – Yomi

Let Black women speak up

'Tell them off? I can't do that. I'd be labelled an angry Black woman, or aggressive, or intimidating.' – Rhoda

Leaders need to create a safe environment for Black women to speak up about what they see and how they feel. The worry about being labelled as an angry, aggressive Black woman is real, and it limits how far Black women can go.

Many Black women worry about feeding this negative stereotype of anger and disruptiveness – this form of otherness. It permeates everything they do in the workplace.

Try to put yourself in their position. You may take it for granted that everyone listens to you and takes notice of your views. Many Black women do not enjoy that privilege.

Create a more inclusive culture

You may not realise it, and it's unlikely to be a deliberate thing, but your workplace culture could be perpetuating white privilege and marginalising your Black team members.

An example is after-work drinks – a staple of many teams. Many Black women will have no cultural connection to after-work drinks. They're not against it – it's just not something they were raised to do.

When the invites come round for drinks after work, it's possible that Black female team members will not want to go. But, they will go, so they are not seen as stand-offish or not a team player. This makes them anxious.

Leaders shouldn't stop after work drinks altogether, but think of ways you can make it more inclusive. Could you propose other activities to bring the team together without creating more tension?

Have more Black people in your leadership team (if you want to hire more Black people)

When young, talented Black women are deciding whether to join a company, they do their research.

'The first thing I do is go to LinkedIn. I click on the company profile; then I click on 'people'. I will scroll and scroll and look to see how many different ethnicities there are. I'll also look at what the leadership team looks like.' - Rhoda

Of course, there's more to an environment, but it's a start. What would that young Black woman see if she scrolled through your organisation's LinkedIn?

Get more Black people in your leadership team; you'll get more Black people applying to work with you. It's as simple as that.



Be mindful of what some Black women struggle with

If you're not a Black woman, or at least very close to Black women in your life, the chances are that you have no idea the things they have to deal with every day.

'It's like an extra job on top of what you're paid to do!' – Yomi

From your hairstyle to the way you sign off your emails, many Black women feel they can't be their whole selves in the workplace.

They stay late at work because they don't want to make any mistakes, but then worry that staying late makes them look incompetent.

Many feel the pressure to conform to the rules laid down by white people – otherwise, they would be seen as unprofessional. They have to watch the way they talk, the kinds of words they use in emails – it's exhausting, emotionally and professionally.

Does your organisation put pressure on Black women to fit the cookie-cutter mould? If so, it's time to stop.

Recalibrate what it means to be professional

Tolerating Black women if they present themselves in a palatable form, is not tolerating them at all. Pushing people to fit the mould has its roots in elitism.

'We need a complete upheaval, a radical recalibration of who we consider to be a successful and professional person.' – Yomi

If your workplace is truly inclusive, Black women shouldn't have to wear their hair or dress in a certain way, or watch how they talk or write. Everyone should be able to bring more of themselves to work.

It should start with hiring. Start to look for people who didn't go to university, or are diverse in the way they think.

'Blind CVs are not even remotely a step in the right direction.' – Yomi

Think about different types of intelligence

'Someone from a state school on free school dinners getting a C is far more of an achievement than someone from a private school going to Oxbridge.' – Yomi

The playing field isn't level. That's why we need a recalibration of what it means to be intelligent.

If you have a CV from someone who graduated from a good university, and another from someone who got a C at A-Level, your instinct will be to hire the grad. But, think of what the other student had to go through to achieve that grade.

There is more than one type of intelligence. There are transferable skills that they don't teach you at university. Being able to attend university is as much about money as it is about intelligence.

Leaders should do what they can to redress the balance.

Create an environment where it's OK to talk about race

'I stood up for myself early in my career. And I didn't pass probation. After that, I felt like I could never speak up.' – Rhoda

Black women need to be able to speak about whatever is on their mind without fear of repercussions. This is all down to the environment created by the leaders of the organisation.

The best leaders will talk about race, either formally with the entire team, or casually on a one-to-one basis. It makes people feel like they matter, creating a place where they might be brave and speak up.

If there are barriers that make Black women feel like they cannot talk, it is down to the leader to remove them.

“When I read Slay In Your Lane, 50% of it I found that I do. 25% I’m close to doing. But then there’s this 25% that I had no idea about!”

- Pete Crosby

Be the person your people want to come to

Not everyone is lucky enough to be empowered by their leader to speak openly.

For Black women, it will take time before they feel comfortable enough to talk about the challenges they face in front of everybody. In the meantime, as a leader, you can be the person they want to talk to.

Even if you’re not at the top of your organisation, you can make a difference by making yourself available and going to bat for people who feel they can’t or don’t want to do it for themselves.

Understanding otherness is hard – but you need to try

‘When I read Slay In Your Lane, 50% of it I found that I do. 25% I’m close to doing. But then there’s this 25% that I had no idea about!’ – Pete

It’s hard to put yourself in the position of someone you have seemingly very little in common with. You may discover things about yourself you don’t like. But it is worth it, and it will improve the lives of the people you work with.

Leaders must make ending otherness a priority.

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How to adapt the hiring process to choose well from a diverse talent pool

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Chair, Women of Revenue Collective Group

Catie is also RVP of Sales at Demandbase. She is a huge advocate for getting more women into sales and sales leadership roles.

ACTIONABLE TIPS

Diversity in your leadership team is essential

If your leadership team is homogenous, it drastically affects your ability to hire for diversity, even if you go out of your way to try. Diversity in leadership is imperative.

'They go to great lengths to find out how many people they have of an ethnic minority in the company.' – Tom

Talented individuals from diverse backgrounds want to see people who look like them, not just in their team, but at the top of their organisation.

Companies with diverse leadership don't need to be deliberate about hiring for diversity. The right people 'just know'.

Be intentional about diversity in your early days

If you're lucky enough to be starting a company right now, you have the chance to make life a lot easier further down the road.

'The first ten people in your company tend to reflect your first 100. Your first 100 reflect your first 1000.' - Meera

When you're starting a company, so much hiring is done through referrals, networking, friends of friends. If you can be deliberate with your first ten hires, making it a reflection of the diversity you want to see in future, the network will do the rest.

If you do not do this, even if you try to source candidates from more diverse places, they probably won't want to come to you. They want to see people that look like them across the company, as well as the top.

Black talent is out there – go and find it

'The reality is that there are some phenomenal individuals out there. But you might have to be willing to go out and find them.' – Catie

The CEO of Wells Fargo, the US banking giant, gave the excuse for its lack of diversity that there is only a limited pool of Black talent.

Of course, this is totally wrong. It signifies a lack of effort to go the extra mile to find talented Black people.

If you want to hire different people, stop looking in the same old places. Stop hiring friends of employees if all your employees are more or less the same.

You could just put it out there. Post on LinkedIn or Twitter, 'Hey, I'm looking for rockstar Black sales leaders.' You'd be surprised how well it works.

skills, who will be a great addition to your team. But remember, you still have to appeal to them, too.

If that candidate doesn't see someone who looks like them on the interview panel, you're immediately at a disadvantage.

'We interviewed just an exceptional Black woman for our sales team, but we had three white men on the panel. We really wanted to hire her, but she called out the fact that she didn't see people like her in the interview room, or on the rest of the team. It was really unfortunate for us and we had to work hard to convince her that it was something we took seriously.'
– Tom

'Tokenism is a symbolic effort to do something, like recruiting a small number of people from an underrepresented group, to give the appearance of equality in a workforce.'

– Meera Raikundalia

Own your lack of diversity

No one is perfect. Every journey towards achieving real diversity in hiring begins with a first step.

If someone does call you out on it. The best thing to do is to admit the situation you're in and own it. Do not try to cover it up.

'Address the elephant in the room. We recognise that maybe the process you're going to go through does not reflect the level of diversity that we would like to see represented across the team. We'd love any feedback you're willing to share.' -
Catie

When it's you that brings it up, you have the opportunity to show that you're committed to making changes. It also serves to put the candidate at their ease, rather than having a nagging doubt in the back of their mind. Address the elephant in the room.

You're also going to get some useful feedback that you can put into action on a long-term basis.

Use the interview to validate information

Too often, we use interviews as a means to collect information. But is that really the best use of your time?

'You have an hour. If you don't use that time to get to know your candidate, you will end up filling in the gaps yourself.' – Charlotte

Of course, as soon as you start filling in those gaps yourself, you leave yourself open to adding your own biases into the mix.

Instead, get all the information on the candidate that you think you will need before the interview stage. Then use that information as a base to start a conversation where you can probe deeper.

You will understand your candidate far better, which will lead to a fairer, more objective decision.

Avoid tokenism in your hiring

'Tokenism is a symbolic effort to do something, like recruiting a small number of people from an underrepresented group, to give the appearance of equality in a workforce.' – Meera

It's the result of looking for diversity, without thinking about inclusion. Avoid tokenism by educating on the issues that exist. Use your empathy to show the way.

You should also try not to make anybody think that they are the token candidate. Make sure you have more than one person from a diverse background at the final stage of the interview process.

What can you add to your culture?

'Stop hiring to fit the culture. Instead, identify what you can add to the culture.' – Anoma

As part of your quest for diversity in hiring, be more thoughtful about your job descriptions and advertisements. Make sure everyone involved in the interview process knows that you are hiring for diversity. Get them working towards the goal.

There is no culture if everyone is the same, like a football team with 11 goalkeepers on it!

It starts with the leadership team, so bringing more people from diverse backgrounds on board should be your priority.

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Selling diversity – introducing anti-bias initiatives into our teams

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CEO, Culture Shift

Amongst many other things, Gemma helped the Equalities Commission produce reports about racial harassment at universities and bullying in the workplace.



Kevin Shah

CEO and Co-founder, Jaago

Kevin is Captain Empathy. Here to help companies make empathy a habit and enhance their diversity and inclusion initiatives!

ACTIONABLE TIPS

Be aware of your biases

We all have our biases. Hopefully, most of them are unintentional, but they exist nonetheless.

You could be biased towards people of the same gender, sexuality, someone who tells you they support the same football team. On the other hand, you could be naturally biased against different groups for the same reasons. Whatever it is, we need to try to eliminate them.

The best way to eradicate these biases is to bring more diverse points of view into your teams. The more different backgrounds there are in your workplace, the harder it is for unintentional biases to come to the fore.

'Make it a habit, like drinking water or scanning your badge. Make it as critical as information security. Empathy is a core thread to deliver those outcomes.' – Kevin

Don't lower the bar, modify your lens

'Sometimes, people confuse reducing adverse impact with celebrating diversity. But they're different things.' – Lara

For too long, hiring for diversity has been about lowering the bar of acceptability so people from more diverse backgrounds can climb over it. This is not the right approach because it's still all about what works best for the majority.

For example, we expect women to fit into a male-centric system. We're not looking for the unique qualities a woman possesses. For women trying to make their way, this can be pretty insulting.

To overcome this blind spot, we must embrace the concept that there are many different pathways to success and high performance, and they are all as valid as each other. This more holistic approach celebrates and leverages diversity.



Without diversity, you won't survive

'In tech, you need diversity of thought. Without it, you won't produce something that fits the rest of the world.' – Gemma

The pandemic has given us time to reflect. People have discovered that all is not right with the world and it's time to do something about it. Companies need to take this in. Their future is at stake.

Companies that don't truly reflect the society we live in are doomed. Quite simply, young people with raw talent will not want to come and work there. Generation Z cares too much about mission-driven, social impact companies.

A company without diversity is like one that is still sending faxes – totally outdated. Diversity is more than a nice thing to do; it's a matter of survival.

Don't wait – solve your diversity problems now

Glassdoor now shows its users a diversity and inclusion ranking for companies on its platform. That means your company's diversity record is now in the outside world

and up for discussion. What do you think it will show about your organisation?

This is a welcome new development. Other well-regarded company lists such as the Times Top 100 do not take diversity and inclusion into account. In fact, there are companies in the Times Top 100 that do not handle bullying and harassment effectively at all.

Toxic environments cause people to leave and blow the whistle. Don't wait for people to leave your company and broadcast your issues to the world. Take a preventative approach. Solve your problems now.

Measure as much as you can

'Measure diversity and inclusion like you measure information security. You can measure whether you have a weak password, then you fix it. Measure how you demonstrate empathy too.' – Kevin

You should be collecting as much feedback as you can from your team members about how diversity and inclusion could be improved. Make it anonymous to encourage people to come forward without repercussions. You should also have a mechanism to anonymously report negative experiences always available.

What you measure, you can manage. Can you calculate how much your company takes on other perspectives? Can you measure how much you change your habits?

When you can put a score to how well you expose yourself to new ideas and themes, it becomes like a badge of honour.

Get ready to be uncomfortable

'Your organisation has to ask for and welcome discussion about negative incidents.' – Gemma

It's no surprise that for decades, companies have had their fingers in their ears when it comes to incidences of discrimination. It's work – and leads to more work! Why pull on the thread?

Today, it's imperative that you pull on the thread. If toxic actions are hidden, they have an implicit license to continue. Your organisation cannot afford to have a reputation as somewhere where discrimination is swept under the carpet.

So, get ready to be uncomfortable. Face those inconvenient truths head-on. Then, you can tackle them.

'An annoyance moves to a microaggression to something more repetitive and toxic.' – Brandon



Create connections

'When you're a victim of bias, it's a very lonely situation. You sometimes feel like you don't have anyone you can relate to. You feel ashamed.' – Brandon

When people who have suffered from discrimination can connect with people who have been through similar situations, it makes them feel like they are not alone.

It also creates a 'safety in numbers' situation, where people who have experienced bullying, or sexual harassment, or anything else, can come forward and tell their story. It may even prevent it

from happening to other people.

This is a hard job for a leader, but it is worth doing. Tech is there to assist you with the tasks of connecting people and making their voices heard. Make diversity and inclusion platforms as much a part of your tech stack as your CRM.

Bias is not your enemy

We talk about bias like it's something that should be eliminated at all costs. But in truth, there are good biases. We rely on bias to navigate our way through new situations.

'Bias isn't the enemy – it's an ally! We have biases against snakes and cliffs. It's our bias that makes us able to spot a creep from a mile away!' – Lara

But, other biases, like biases against groups of people, are harmful – and we need to know the difference.

Our brains build bias through exposure. We can flip the negative connotation of bias on its head by exposing ourselves to more examples of good diversity practices in action. This will help us reduce harmful biases unconsciously, and make acceptance and inclusion second nature.

Technology is here to help you

Tech can be a force for good in the fight against discrimination and exclusion.

Tech is a problem solver. It helps amplify people's voices, which is invaluable if those voices are rarely heard.

'Privilege isn't a magical thing - it's just a lack of impediments. Tech can move away those impediments, too.' - Lara

It creates communities, allowing people to make connections, share stories and bond over common experiences, whatever their background. It promotes safety and empowerment.

However, you have to use it the right way and go into it with your eyes open.

But, tech is not perfect

Remember that tech is built by humans. It's data from humans that gets taken up by algorithms. Human bias can infiltrate tech, while the tech can also amplify that bias.

For example, if you use software that helps predict which candidates at interview will be a top performer in your organisation, you must be careful that you are not perpetuating generations of bias.

There are also examples of tech discriminating against people of colour, such as facial recognition software that didn't recognise Black faces, but was deemed good enough for release by its makers.

'Tech should be developed by diverse teams to create a diverse society.' – Gemma

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Lasting change – what will it take?

CONTRIBUTORS



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ACTIONABLE TIPS

Change only happens when you start to feel uncomfortable

'There needs to be a significant, emotional, impacting, learning experience – something jarring to the core.' – Yetunde

This year, the Black community has been on the receiving end of the impact. But, what is great to see is that the dominant white demographic has also felt that jarring feeling. Many white people have been moved to feel compassion for people they have rarely previously thought about.

This is excellent news. Plus, it only takes one to start a movement.

Accept yourself

Too many Black people have spent too much time trying to fit in with the white idea of what is.

'I was very dark-skinned, but I saw my light-skinned friends get all the attention. So I would go up to London and buy skin bleaching cream and bleach my skin. I would also pluck my eyebrows, so I looked surprised all the time!' – Yetunde

Finally, many Black people have abandoned these attempts to 'fit in' and are embracing who they are. They are accepting themselves.

Business leaders need to create an environment in their organisation where everyone feels they can be themselves, regardless of race.

But that's not all—leaders must accept themselves, too. Know what is important to you. Know what your beliefs are. When you are confident on your path, you will achieve more.

If you cannot accept yourself, you can't change others. How can you create lasting change if you don't accept who you are?



Be hungry to create lasting change

Change will not happen unless you actively want to make it happen.

A great place to start is by adopting a mindset of curiosity.

'Be curious about yourself and other people. What do other people believe?' – Yetunde

You should also be honest about yourself and what needs to change inside yourself. Do an inventory of your life. Undertake a gap analysis of your networks and friendships.

Think of the people you spend time with. Ask them more questions about what they believe. Listen to the responses. Get the stories, the lived experiences. Find out what life is like for them. Read up on the history of the struggle for racial equality.

When you have done these things, you are in a better position to create change from a genuine place. You can coach, you can mentor, you can be an advocate.

A team that works together achieves more

Every team member should ask themselves, 'Who is in my team?'

A leader's team isn't just the people below them - it's the people alongside them. Don't just look downwards at your team, look across. It's lonely at the top, so you need people to have your back.

'Ubuntu. Because you are, I am.' – Yetunde

We cannot win without each other. It's only when you have this kind of commitment that you can start to create lasting change. When you trust each other, standing together, from a place of love, you can begin to address those elephants in the room.

Facilitate those honest conversations. Talk about what inclusion would look like in your team. Make 'unconditional acceptance' your target. Make all types of bias things of the past.

Less talk, more action

'Talk is cheap. Move from talk to action and review.' – Yetunde

Leaders must set targets for their diversity and inclusion initiatives. Targets show commitment. They show that something is important to you.

When you sit down with your team to talk about diversity and eliminating bias, ask yourself whether you have the right people in the room with you. If you feel you don't, go out there and get the right people.

Create an environment where everybody feels they can speak up without repercussions. Explore every idea that gets put forward.

Then, work towards your targets together.

Do you reflect your community?

'Ask the question. Does our team reflect the colour scheme of the community in which we operate? Does our organisation reflect the palette of colour of the society in which our people live?' - Yetunde

In 2021, there is no more room for excuses.

Your team and company have to be representative of your community.

When young, talented Black people are looking for a new role, they want to see people who look like them in their team. They also want to see people who look like them at the very top of the organisation.

If they do not see these things, they will not come and work there. Can you afford to be discouraging top-level Black talent? Don't throw away that competitive edge.

The survival of every organisation depends on them employing people from more diverse backgrounds and giving them a chance to succeed.

“If you’re running a startup, you are at an advantage here because you can set the foundations you want to build on. But, if you’ve been in business a while, you may need a complete overhaul of your operating model.”

- Yetunde Hofmann

Talk to your new Black team members

Hopefully, your new diversity and inclusion initiatives will lead to you hiring more people from other backgrounds, including more Black people.

That doesn't mean the job is done, however.

When a new Black person joins your team, talk to them openly and honestly. Then, listen to their responses.

‘Ask them the questions. What do you want to see, feel, hear, to really belong here?’ – Yetunde

You might be thinking that you don't do this for anybody else, so why should Black people get this special treatment?

The answer is that you should be asking these questions to everybody. So, start now!

Listen carefully to their responses and do whatever you can to accommodate them. Make creating change a habit in your organisation.

You need a complete overhaul of your operating model

Part of creating lasting change involves an analysis of your entire infrastructure, the way you run your business.

'If you're running a startup, you are at an advantage here because you can set the foundations you want to build on. But, if you've been in business a while, you may need a complete overhaul of your operating model.' - Yetunde

Established companies must conduct a root and branch strategic review of how they operate and how it relates to diversity and inclusion. Your commitment – your willingness to do whatever it takes to make lasting change – will determine where you go.

Aside from breaking the law, nothing should be off-limits when it comes to changing the world for the better.

'Otherwise, I promise you, in twenty years' time, we'll be having this conversation again!' – Yetunde

Change the way you recruit

One of the main reasons we don't have diversity in the workforce is that companies go to the same old places to look for talent. They measure talent using the same old criteria and set their requirements the same way. Is it any wonder nothing changes?

'If you really want diverse talent, backgrounds and colours, you have to go and look for it.' – Yetunde

You don't need to lower the bar to attract new diverse talent. Think of it as broadening your net. Develop new criteria for potential.

Then, inside your organisation, do whatever you can to create a pathway for diverse talent. Look at who gets the best projects inside your business and why. Set targets for your leadership programmes, ensuring you have diverse talent up and down your business. Set targets for promotions.



Only use suppliers who 'get it'

As a leader, you don't just have the power to change your organisation. Your buying power can steer other people and companies towards change too.

Look at your supply chain. Look at companies you invest in. Do they have people of colour up and down their structure? Are they good businesses? Ask them questions to find out. If you don't like what you hear, can you take your business elsewhere?

If you use head-hunters as part of your recruitment operation, examine their working practices too.

'Ask your head-hunters who the people of colour are in their teams. If they cannot answer, shut the door. Encourage them to come back next month and talk again.' – Yetunde

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Conclusion

The previous six talks certainly gave everyone in attendance a lot of food for thought. Feeling inspired, we split into groups for breakout sessions to discuss what we heard and share ideas for the future.

Here is a selection of action points from our breakout sessions:

- › Don't assume your team is fine and you don't need to have a conversation about race. Your team members may not be as comfortable as you think
- › Starting a conversation about race is a much more powerful action if it comes from a head of marketing or sales, rather than an HR leader
- › Start by addressing your own biases first. It will make others much more comfortable to share theirs
- › If you have a platform, use it, even if it's not something you would normally do
- › Avoid token gestures. Changing a company policy isn't enough. You need to back it up with actions
- › Share your diversity and inclusion efforts with the outside world on LinkedIn and in the press
- › Think of improving diversity as future-proofing your business strategy
- › Can diversity be a USP, not just in your business, but in your product as well?
- › Your workforce needs to reflect the population of the area where you operate
- › Startup leaders need to be deliberate about diversity from the very early days
- › Make your diverse, inclusive agenda part of your employer brand. It will help you attract the people you want and need

Thank you for reading this eBook. We hope it inspires you to act now on diversity and inclusion in your organisation.

Thank you to all who made **The Unbiased Playbook** possible.



Revenue Collective of Color

Our EMEA Chapter Heads,
Pete Crosby, Tom Glason, and André Bressel

ABOUT

Revenue Collective is a private membership for high-growth operators who are looking to thrive in today's evolving business world.

Started by Sam Jacobs, Revenue Collective brings together leading operators at exciting companies around the world to form direct and honest relationships. In short, it is the rare chance to find invaluable support from those in similar careers who actually want to see their peers succeed.

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