

Let's Get Practical

An Honest DEIB Discussion

Episode 45: Interview with Pleasure Allen

As a leader, talk is cheap. Action is what counts and practice makes a difference. Below are practical steps to improve performance.

- **Teach people how to treat you.** Find the courage and the ability to speak up with grace and without fear to call out the behaviors and words that are counter to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in your organization. Work to educate others whenever you see the opportunity.
- **Stop saying you don't know where to find diverse candidates for hire.** There are recruiters out there who specialize in just that, so put your money where your mouth is and hire them if you really want to improve diversity at your company.
- **Make DEIB a Core Value.** If you struggle to make progress on DEI and Belonging, or you just want to accelerate things, consider making DEIB a Core Value, not just an addendum or an “oh, by the way...” statement in the handbook. And if you really want employees to get on board, tie that new DEIB Core Value to your core competencies and compensation. Compensation drives behavior more than almost anything else.
- **Identify the spaces you're not evolved in.** As a leader, as a person, and in your company culture, be honest and self-reflective about where you are today versus where you want and need to be. Let this be the first step on the journey of growth and evolution.
- **Be a believer, not just a fan.** Pleasure spoke about this in episode 45, first with her admission of being a full believer in the Starbucks experience, not just a fan of the coffee, and then drawing a comparison to how leaders must view diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. As a fan, you can cheer from the sidelines and hope for progress, or you can lead the charge as a believer and drive real change in your organization. You've heard us say on the podcast before that the single greatest impact on any organization culture is the senior leader, so what kind of progress can you make on DEIB as a believer, not just a fan?
- **Ignore DEIB at your own risk.** We think this one goes without saying, but if you truly need examples, go back and listen to the whole of episode 45. You'll hear how your commitment to DEIB – or lack thereof – impacts your culture, your customers, vendors and suppliers, your recruiting efforts, your ability to scale and grow, and so much more.
- **Don't let fear of being in the press guide your behavior.** We get it: DEIB is a messy and sometimes scary topic, one that makes leaders nervous and unsure about what steps to

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take. Do it anyway. These days, you can find yourself in the press at any time, so it might as well be for taking a stand for the right reasons. Check in with your core values, do what you know is right, and the rest will take care of itself.

- **It takes courage to evolve ourselves in our humanity, especially as leaders.** To do that, we have to challenge what we've learned and what no longer serves us, we have to know our values, we have to continue to question ourselves, and we have to be perpetual learners. When we do all of this, we can welcome in more grace and love.
- **No one yet has mastered this topic.** DEIB is not easy to solution. It's not a one-size-fits-all. Do what you need to expand your thinking, then engage your people in the process of becoming more inclusive. Commit to giving it your best shot. You'll learn and adjust along the way just like everyone else as long as you remain open.
- **DEIB isn't just about race.** Expand your thinking, because simply becoming more diverse won't get you where you need to go. Inclusivity, equity, and belonging are important characteristics you'll need in your organization if you hope to retain any of the diverse employees you hire.
- **All of us have an obligation to change, educate, and learn.** No matter your race, gender, ethnicity, religion, age, background, or any other characteristic with which you identify, you simply can't stop learning about how to celebrate, include, and care for others. We all still have so much to learn about this topic and each other. As CEO, you must role-model this for everyone in the organization.

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