

Transcending the Performative : Towards Substantive DEIB Efforts

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SEAoNY Mission

To advance the art of structural engineering by:



- Building a **community** of colleagues
- Sharing **knowledge**
- **Advocating** for the profession
- Promoting public **safety**

The mission of the Structural Engineers Association of New York (SEAoNY) Diversity Committee, established in 2018, is to advocate for the inclusion and advancement of marginalized and underrepresented groups by fostering dialogue, raising awareness, and proposing solutions for the betterment of the structural engineering community.

Volunteer Engagement / Vertical Communication

SEAoNY engages diverse members and volunteers in fulfilling and enriching service, facilitating an understanding of how their work is strategically aligned with the direction of the organization and advancement of the profession.



Today we will:

- Explore the characteristics of performative and substantive DEIB efforts
- Consider the roles of people, culture and change management



Defining DEIB

Diversity

The wide variety of personal and group characteristics (identities) that make one individual or group different from or similar to another.

WHO

Inclusion

Efforts **resulting in experiences of respect, belonging, and full engagement.** Inclusion can be applied to policies, programs and practices with the aggregate effect of an inclusive **organizational culture and climate.**

WHY

Equity

Fair and just practices and policies ensuring all can thrive by **acknowledging and addressing structural historic and current inequities** that advantage some and disadvantage others. **Assessing and adjusting** policies, programs, and practices to **facilitate fairness.**

HOW

Belonging

The state of **acceptance and affirmation,** typically accompanied by **psychological safety and authenticity.** A culture of belonging makes those feel valued by **welcoming all dimensions** of their identities, experiences, and perspectives.

WHAT

Characteristics of performative DEIB

Reactive rather than proactive

No stated or strategic alignment with business goals, competitive advantage

Minoritized person(s) appointed/voluntold to lead with no experience, training

Interest/identity presumes proficiency

Groups (councils, committees, ERGs) formed without clear purpose, success definition

No allocated resources (time, expertise, budget)



Characteristics of performative DEIB

Externally focused (i.e. awards and activities) rather than internally guided (i.e. here's where we're headed, what we are doing and why, with the accompanying resources and support)

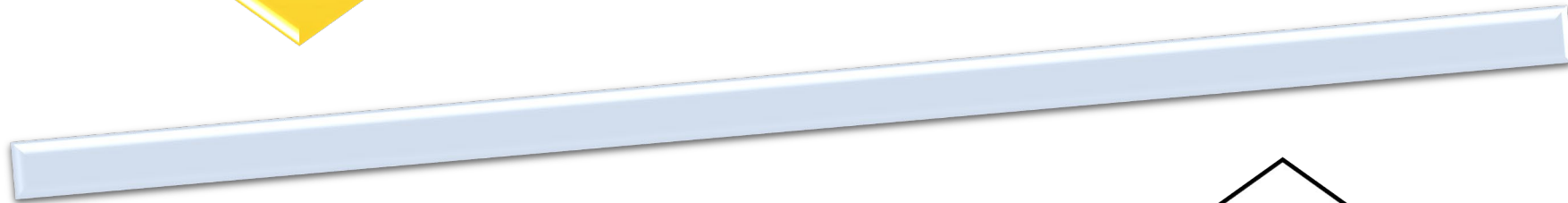
Focus ONLY on diversity (i.e. representation) without inclusion, equity, and organizational culture considerations

Short-term expected return without multi-year strategy





Being



Doing



The Role of People and Culture

Culture

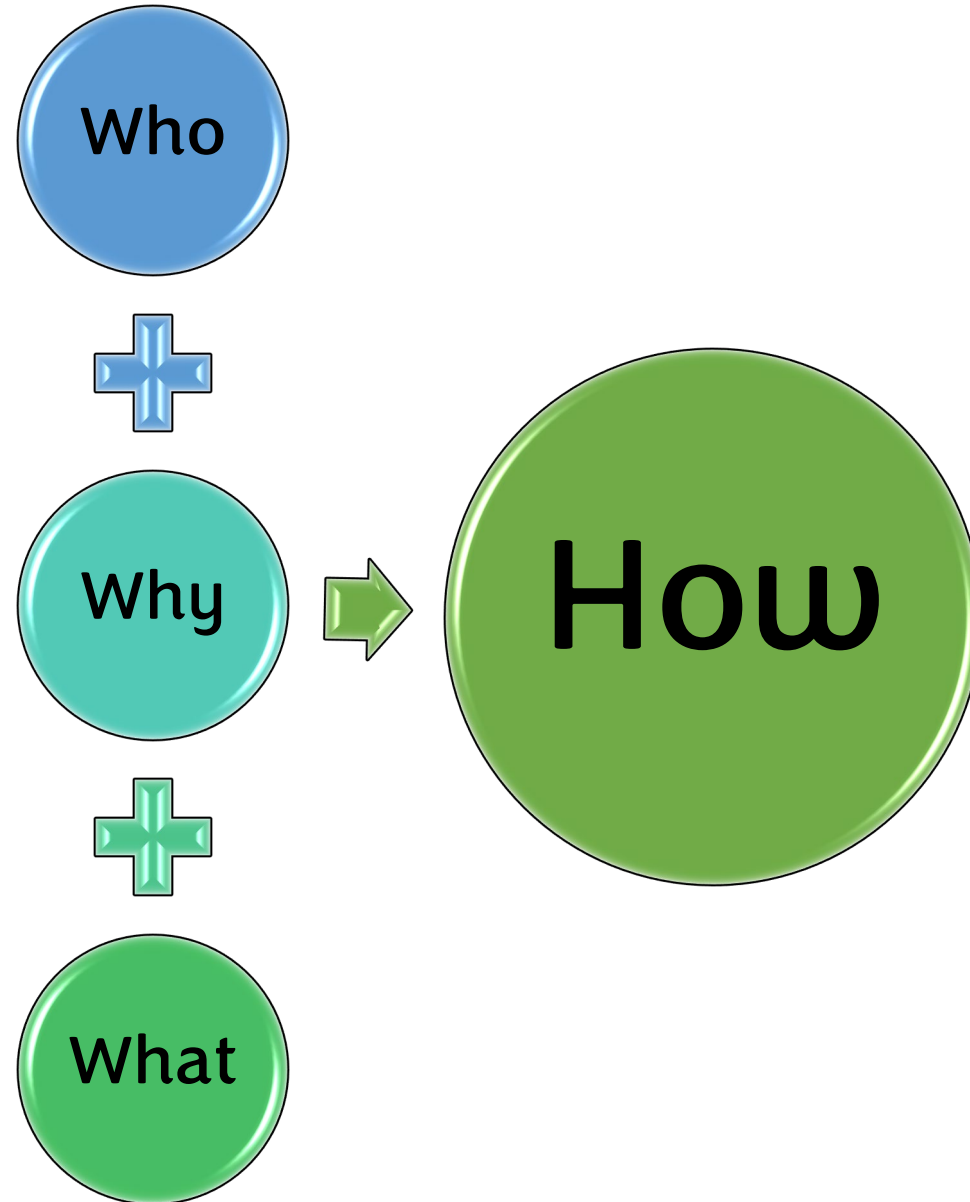
- The total accumulation of many beliefs, customs, activities, institutions and communication patterns of an identifiable group of people

Organizational Culture

- Values, beliefs, norms of an organization
- Expressed in the policies, practices, programs and people (4Ps)

Need understanding of culture, how it's expressed to ***affect people's behaviors towards equity, inclusion, and belonging***

Defining your...



How can innovation-yielding compositional diversity affect your organization's business strategy?

What's the application to environmental and social responsibility (external) AND employee engagement (internal)?

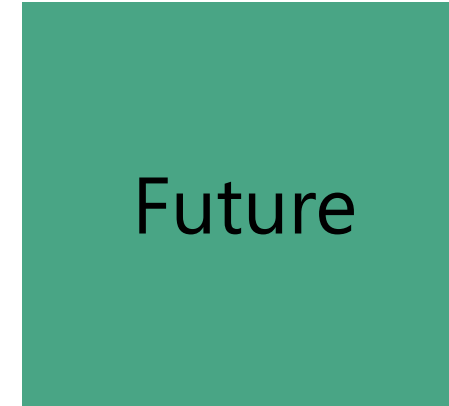
What changes are you willing to make to your policies, programs, and practices to attract and retain the people yielding innovation?

What time, talent, and resources are required to engage ALL employees in efforts to create a more intentionally inclusive and equitable operation?

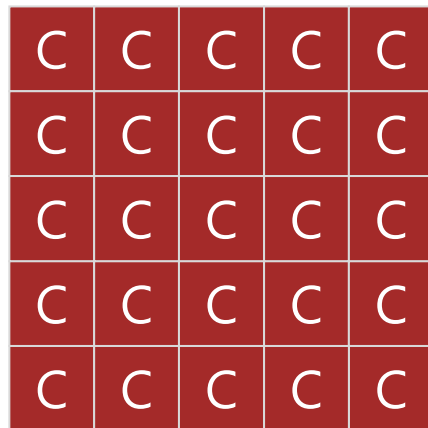
What role does each area of the business play in achieving success?



An Organizational Move to a Future State

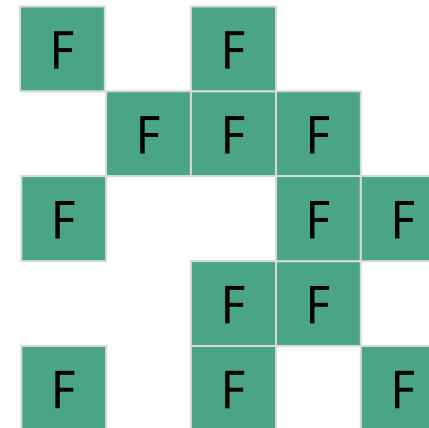


Ultimately requires individuals to move from their current to their future state



Requires:

- Executive leadership
- Role-based communication articulating the what, why, and how
- Professional development re: behaviors, practices
- Clear expectations, measurement, and outcomes



5 Change Elements

Awareness
Desire
Knowledge
Ability
Reinforcement



The WHY and the WIFM

The HOW

Organizational Change

Intentionally Inclusive Change Management



Aurora Change
Agency
STRATEGIC EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Identify the current state

What is the existing experience (climate) of your employees? What does “point A” **look** and **feel** like? How is the existing culture defined – and by whom?

Determine the future state

What are you solving for? What does “point B” look and feel like individually, departmentally, organizationally?

The process is the product

What operational 4ps and accompanying behaviors are needed to get to point B for each function of the organization to achieve the future state? ***How can those be developed collaboratively?***

Make it stick

What should accountability look like (without quotas and retaliation)? What culture is needed to support?

Organizational Culture



A holistic approach

- Facilitating intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational recognition of the role we play in humanizing each other so that people can be affirmed
- Allows people to bring their authentic selves to work, with opportunities to address undesirable behavior that's not punitive, but reflective, awareness-building, and restorative
- Applied through evaluation and adaptation of policies, programs, and practices undergirded by inclusive behavioral change



Accountability = Commitment



Collaborative defining

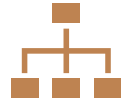


What does accountability look like?



DEI Strategy

Defined purpose, vision, and outcomes – with appropriate human and financial resources



Leadership

Roles and commitments, with accountability measures at the highest levels



Performance Management

Including DEIB competencies in evaluations and assessments – what is valued gets measured



Inclusive Culture

Via organizational values, beliefs, and norms developed collaboratively





Questions and Perspectives



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**Adding
PROFICIENCY to
your passion for
DEIB**

For consideration...

What is your organization's who and why?

What would solving *intentionally* for diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging look like?