

Inclusive Leadership is Needed Now More than Ever.

By Ann N. Gatty, Ph.D.



Why Inclusive leadership? Why now? During this pandemic everyone's world has been rocked. Even if people have not been personally affected by COVID-19, they probably know people who have been affected and they fear that distress and disaster could be lurking nearby. Anxiety levels are high.

The role as a leader made a dramatic shift this past year. With more employees working from home, the blending of both professional and personal responsibilities increased significantly. Employees are affected by the pandemic experience in uneven ways. According to recent research, women and people of color are more significantly impacted. The recent Gallup polling found that the workforce is currently down 500,000 more women than men. Inclusive leaders are sensitive to the different levels of impact. Finding ways to accommodate these challenges in a necessity moving forward.

Although the pandemic has wreaked havoc among society, this time can be used to revisit and improve the way we work. The reality is that way we work will never be the same as it was pre-pandemic. So, this is an opportune time to ditch bad habits and craft a new operating model.

Talking about diversity, equity and inclusion is in vogue now. But it should be more than a popular and trending concept. Those companies that (1) create a diverse workforce and (2) build in equity into one's ability to succeed, are more likely to witness organizational growth and prosperity. Thirdly, being inclusive promotes greater innovative ideas and builds a workforce that takes ownership in the business goals. Being inclusive allows everyone's voices to be heard and their ideas to be considered.

Embracing inclusive leadership allows you to break from the past and embark on a new direction to accommodate the changing societal landscape. It will require you to challenge the status quo and demonstrate that diversity and inclusion is a personal priority. You boost employee engagement when you include both personal and professional development goals for each employee. In this manner you avoid overlooking hidden skill talents that employees may own but have not shown because they have never been asked to use them.



Inclusive leadership focuses on listening to other points of view and unlocking employee potential. Letting the employees contribute to the development of annual goals becomes an enriching opportunity for the growth of the company. Encourage your staff to be their best selves and create their best work.

Inclusive leadership requires openness and transparency. Are you aware of personal blind spots you and others may have? Are there flaws in the organizational system that become barriers for promotions or limiting meritocratic rise within the organization?

Inclusive leadership embraces the celebration of otherness. These leaders show respect and curiosity to others' cultures. They listen without judgement and put themselves in others' shoes to understand those around them.

Most important, inclusive leadership ushers in a sense of belonging. It is one thing to hire a diverse set of employees, and it make certain that there are equitable opportunities available for all different talents and abilities. An inclusive workforce embraces respect for other points of view and respect for contributions put forth. Yet, the final result from providing inclusive leadership is an understanding that everyone belongs, and everyone plays a part creating organizational success.

About the Author

Dr. Ann Gatty is a business development strategist. She helps her clients clarify the vision for their businesses, boost their leadership capabilities and add quality talent to help the clients reach their goals. Through a collaborative mentoring process, she and her clients create workable strategic business plans and success initiatives, while improving their workplace processes. Dr. Gatty is a frequent writer and contributor www.AllBusiness.com, www.MarketingInsiders.com, and www.WomenOnBusiness.com. Her interactive speaking engagements assist participants in discovering new-found talents and skills that they can immediately apply in the workplace. Join her [Facebook Group, Strategic Thinking Summit Elites](#) for strategies you can implement to grow your business success and enjoy camaraderie with others entrepreneur members.