

Authentic DEI: Making it Personalized, Actionable and Transparent

Authors

Vishal Hindocha
Global Head of Sustainability Strategy

Michelle Thompson-Dolberry
Chief Diversity Equity and Inclusion Officer



To listen to the full conversation.

Make DEI personalized, actionable and transparent to get buy-in for the journey

When it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), the key for any organization is to be authentic and genuine with the work they are doing. Michelle does not see DEI as a spectator sport but rather as an area in which everyone can do their part. She has realized that each person relates to it differently, so first you must meet people and understand where they are by talking to them. Then you make things actionable so people know what you want them to do, and you help them understand the role they can play and how important it is. Michelle recommends focusing on transparency so people know why DEI actions are happening, which can help people buy in and join the journey. It's less about making the case for DEI and more about appreciating that people are listening for different things, so there's a need to find a message that resonates, whether it's a personal story or bigger picture.

Use disagreements to find clarity and foster compassion

We don't all have to agree all the time to move forward together, in Michelle's experience. Instead, it's about how you come together as an organization and move forward together. People shy away from disagreement and friction, but Michelle views it as a way to find clarity. She also sees the case for talking more about compassion versus striving for comprehension. People might not be able to understand another person's path, but they can still be compassionate.

Practical ways to implement DEI in the workplace

Michelle believes DEI policies should be a baseline rather than a bolt-on at organizations, with the goal of embedding it throughout the employee and client journey as well as in marketing, products and services. She sees a difference between process and checking the box; when you build a better process, you feel better about the result regardless of what it is. There is also value in sharing successes with others so everybody can get the shortcut version of how to do this work better together.

Companies should focus on accountability, starting with transparency and understanding the data. If people don't know what change you're trying to make and why, they're less likely to join the journey. For example, Michelle has driven more accountability throughout MFS by implementing a DEI goal within all employees' performance reviews.



Leaders can also put DEI on the team agenda, and each team member is responsible for its incorporation (on a rotating basis). Team members need not take a position in a given discussion but might, for example, bring in research they have conducted to discuss with the team. Similarly, Michelle suggests having discussions among colleagues on a variety of topics not necessarily involving race, gender, sexual orientation or identity. Team members could, for example, focus instead on learning more about each other's learning styles and preferred working practices.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss key sustainability themes with you. Please contact allangles@mfs.com and we will be happy to help.

View our Diversity Annual Report 2022 to find out more about our priorities, key metrics and progress.

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