

Innovation – The Future of Diversity

Aligning diversity practices with bottom-line results



Overview

Diversity

Leadership

Innovation

Traditionally, and even more so in the current economic climate, all actions within a company need to enhance business performance in some way. Since all leaders are being asked to do more with less, the name of the game is to work **smarter, more creatively and more efficiently**. At JBC, we believe that by harnessing the power of a diverse workforce, companies can find concrete, untapped ways to impact productivity, culture and customers. Diverse workforces and the Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) within them are on the pulse of organizational culture and climate; they can advise on developing culturally-competent sales and marketing techniques to a diverse consumer base, they are mechanisms for developing future business leaders, and they are teeming with business innovation potential.

This report helps managers and practitioners across the business link diversity, leadership, and innovation in a way that ensures business impact.

It describes JBC's mission to help companies strategically align diversity and inclusion initiatives to bottom line-producing practices. Internal champions must articulate the benefits of this approach to both the employee *and* the business, influencing across business units, within middle management, and through far-flung geographies. Our shared future vision is to help translate the diversity imperative to one of productivity, effective business strategy, employee engagement, and ultimately ROI.

Who is JBC?



JBC is a strategic diversity consulting firm that works with large and small businesses to build forward-thinking organizational practices that foster diversity, leadership and innovation. Founded in 2004, JBC guides the efforts of HR, Diversity and Inclusion (D+I) and Employee Resource Group champions to align diversity with business imperatives. With a worldwide client base and a network of over 1600 HR and Diversity Professionals, JBC is a thought leader in blending proprietary, strategic content with external best practices.

We provide clients with high-touch, customized experiences that address the needs of program leaders, no matter what their stage of development. We are experts in translating the impact of diversity and inclusion to organizational leadership and facilitating with the latest web 2.0 technologies. We harness the power of tomorrow's workforce...today..

Diversity – A Balanced Approach

Diversity ERGs serve two vital functions in a company; they can generate enormous benefit for both the employee and the business.



Employee Benefits

ERGs develop ways to deeply engage employees with the business, helping employees to give 100% at work; ERGs also help the business recruit, retain and develop top talent. ERGs accomplish these goals through:

- Support systems
- Cultural awareness and sensitivity programs
- Mentor programs
- Recruitment initiatives

Typical Metrics

- Employee recruitment, retention and advancement



Business Benefits

Additionally, ERGs hold enormous business potential. They can be the key for successful development by helping the company:

- Generate innovative business solutions
- Hone sales and marketing strategies
- Develop products
- Enter new markets
- Improve operations
- Engage clients
- Commercialize

Typical Metrics

- Revenue Generation
- Business Development

Finding the Balance

Connecting Diversity and Innovation – An In-Depth Look

This model is unique in that it puts diversity in the driver's seat for innovative business. It charges diversity strategists and practitioners with developing ways to deepen their relationship with the overall business. By having a diversity initiative address not only Human Resource and employee engagement needs but also business-centric line functions and the business leadership pipeline, we can collectively take diversity to the next level.

Diversity, in all its dimensions, creates strength in leadership – in different markets with different people across business ecosystem. Leadership across the ecosystem directly links to innovative, forward-thinking business.

Innovation – The Future of Diversity

Aligning diversity practices with bottom-line results



This model is unique in that it expands the impact of diversity by:

- Including multiple dimensions of diversity, including diversity of thought
- Creating an innovative talent pool for next generation business leaders
- Connecting various business communities across the ecosystem (employees, customers, suppliers) to diversity and innovation.
- Challenging companies to find new business solutions based on diverse perspectives

At the core of innovation is one simple thing – finding unique solutions to common problems.

Tying innovation and business solutions directly with diversity efforts helps to translate the importance of diversity across functions. Any diverse group has the potential to enable innovative practices, if they are given the appropriate opportunity.

Who is this model for?

This model is applicable for diversity ERGs at every stage of development. From companies who are just kicking off their first ERGs to ones who have years of experience but are ready to take their work to the next level. And we admit – this concept is bold. It challenges the field of diversity in a new way. At JBC, we see the field ready for it – poised to push boundaries and make lasting change in all ways.

Now, let's look at each of the elements of the Diversity | Leadership | Innovation model, in depth.

The Model – Step by Step

Diversity

Identity

Style

Experience

Expertise

Diversity of Thought

Forward-thinking definitions of diversity include multiple dimensions, such as:

- Identity: gender, nationality, race/ethnicity and sexual orientation
- Style: ways of working and places to work (virtually, on the road, etc.); ways to communicate (social media platforms)
- Experience: across geographies, generations, different business industries and sectors
- Expertise: training and understanding across disciplines.

By expanding the definition of diversity, companies can more readily translate the concept of diversity across groups and geographies.

JBC Action Steps

- Balance building community and building business – both are necessary for growth and impact
- Identify key diversity groups in the organization and allow for diversity of style, expertise and experience within existing groups.
- Create ways to convene (i.e. ERGs) for employees based on dimensions beyond identity. Example: Engage virtual employees; employees across generations; employees with different experience levels (i.e. globe trotters)
- Provide opportunities for employees across geographies to be involved in convening events

Leadership

Employees

Customers

Suppliers

The Business Ecosystem

Although it is vital to link diversity to recruiting, retaining and engaging employees, this isn't the whole story. Diversity is linked to leadership in different markets, and with different people across the business ecosystem:

- **Employees** – Recruit, retain and develop a diverse set of innovative leaders
- **Customers** – Understand and connect with a diverse customer base in order to create successful business. ERGs can help better understand new and existing (B2B + B2C) customer markets
- **Suppliers** – Engage diverse suppliers, find new and innovative ways to build supply chain relationships

JBC Action Steps

- Define diversity in each of community: Employees; Customers; Suppliers
- Identify ERG top talent to further build the talent pipeline
- Coordinate activities with internal leadership development programs
- Define diversity in each key community
- Have ERGs delve deeper into diverse customer bases – and don't stop at B2C; B2B markets are diverse in terms of industry, expertise and identity
- Engage ERGs to help navigate new markets

Innovation

Product

Process

- Sales
- Marketing

Strategy

- Market Expansion

Creating Stronger Business in Multiple Ways

Innovation is the key to success in the current competitive business landscape. At the core of innovation is finding unique solutions to common problems; and the more diverse an employee base, the more opportunity a company has to innovate – and ERGs can be the source of this innovation.

There are three main ways to innovate:

- **Product Innovation**
Definition: Developing sellable, marketable products that *work*. Example: Financial Service Packages for targeted markets.
- **Processes Innovation**
Definition: Creating day-to-day processes in fresh, efficient, and/or cost-effective ways. Example: Training a customer service team for the LGBT market; a new way of filling customer orders that takes half the time.
- **Strategy Innovation**
Definition: Influencing the way business moves forward, such as moving into new markets, product development, re-defining business stakeholders and meeting their needs (cultural competency in a new market strategy). Example: Hispanic ERG leverages knowledge to help company expand strategically in Central America.

JBC Action Steps

- Investigate key challenges of the organization and how ERGs can help. Talk to line managers.
- Examine daily processes. Where is there waste? How can business be tightened? ERGs can answer these questions.
- Find silos across departments and divisions and see how ERGs can help. ERGs are cross-functional teams – how can cross-company learning happen?

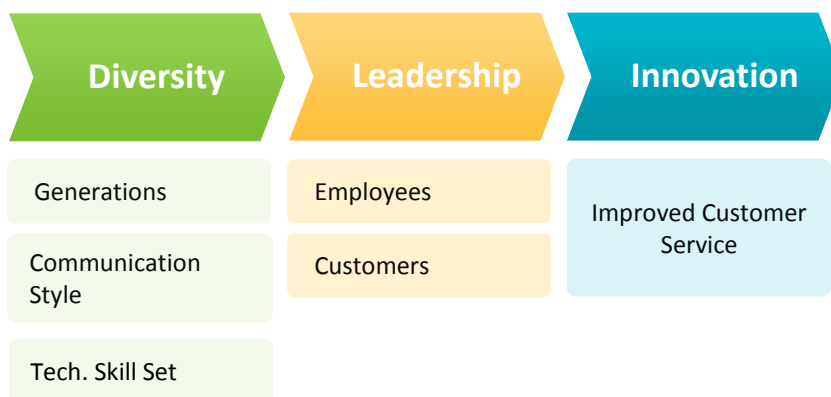
Case Studies

On the following page, we provide two examples of the model in action - see how this model can be applied to your own organization. To explore ways that JBC can help you connect Diversity | Leadership | Innovation at your company, or to share your own stories on how diversity practices took a leadership stance across the business ecosystem and created business innovations, **contact us at: david@jenniferbrownconsulting.com**.

The following are case studies of the Diversity | Leadership | Innovation model in action.

Case Study 1: Automaker

Challenge: One of the world's largest automotive manufacturers needed to provide excellent customer service that addressed the needs of their customers – who are diverse in terms of age and communication style.



Diversity | Leadership | Innovation – Connected

This company assessed the different communication styles and technology skill sets (such as telephone, email and chat service) that employees of different generations preferred on the customer service team. Then, they looked across the company's ecosystem to better understand the needs of the customer, and the modes of interaction they preferred. Training and role re-definition led to a better match between rep and customer.

Case Study 2: Healthcare

Challenge: One of the largest Catholic health systems in the US wanted to better recruit Generation Y employees to their hospitals.



Diversity | Leadership | Innovation – Connected

This organization assessed the unique skill sets of Generation Y employees and wanted to capitalize on their use of social media tools, like Facebook. Then, the company looked at all the communities in the ecosystem where they wanted to take a leadership position, and found that employees could connect with new recruits via these social networking tools. By creating a Facebook recruitment site, Trinity health created a new recruitment route and increased efficiency in their recruitment process.