

# Four Tips for Developing Inclusive Leadership Skills to Manage a Diverse Workforce

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People want to be part of a company that recognizes and respects them, no matter their particular gender, race, or beliefs. So companies need to have an inclusive mindset among their leadership if they want to foster a collaborative culture and one that promotes company growth.

Leaders who work to build a culture of diversity earn the trust and respect of their employees. A recent study of almost 2,000 companies showed that those businesses that had a diverse leadership also had 20 percent higher revenue on average than those that did not.

## Here a few strategies for leaders to develop a diverse and inclusive workplace culture.

### 1. Become aware of your unrecognized biases

As we mature, we all develop attitudes and beliefs about the way the world works and about the people in it. We learn these attitudes from our friends, family, social group and life experiences. Often we develop stereotypes about other groups of people without even being aware of it.

To become a leader who values inclusivity, you need to learn to recognize these hidden biases that you might have, to become aware of them. You cannot solve a problem if you don't know it exists to begin with. By developing an awareness of these hidden biases, you can learn to adjust your beliefs about other groups and to make greater efforts to try and understand them.

### 2. Be open-minded.

To learn how to become a leader who values diversity, you need to ask questions and you need to learn. You need to take the time to try and understand where other people are coming from, what their values and beliefs are, and why they hold these particular sentiments.

### 3. Weed out aggressive behavior

Aggressive behavior doesn't necessarily have to take the form of open hostility. It can involve more subtle and little-noticed negative attitudes toward certain groups of people, whether intentional or not. These low-level aggressive attitudes also stem from biases that people have, and they can do a lot to undermine trust and goodwill among workers.

To be an inclusive leader, you have to be aware of these subtle aggressions as well and work to root them out so that they don't undercut the collaborative nature of the workplace.

### 4. Be vigilant

There are a number of things that can chip away at an inclusive work culture. Many of them

might not seem very important, but they matter. For example, the kind of behavior you accept as a leader will speak volumes to your employees. If you allow behavioral biases, such as an offhand joke at someone else's expense, these things will eventually undermine the trust and respect people have for you.

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