



White Men & Diversity

For All Employees

This Meeting in a Box tool is designed for distribution to ALL your employees. The links to our educational content as well as the guided questions enable your employees to have substantial discussions about why white men at all levels should be involved in

diversity and inclusion, and how best to get them engaged.

We will discuss getting senior-management support, successful strategies for reaching middle managers, and how to refute negative arguments.

1 GETTING SENIOR MANAGEMENT BUY-IN

Make It Personal: [PricewaterhouseCoopers](#) (No. 5 in [The 2014 DiversityInc Top 50 Companies for Diversity](#)) has made a concerted effort to involve white men in diversity. It must [start at the top with the partners](#), says Chris Brassell, Director, National Office of Diversity. He says: “We have 90-minute conversations with groups of 10 to 15 for a sense of intimacy. It’s a safe environment where candid conversations can take place. We need to hear their personal stories, to understand the intelligence of those in the room. Does he have a gay brother? Is he married to an Asian woman?”

Altria Group (one of [DiversityInc’s 25 Noteworthy Companies](#)) holds a two-day executive-leadership summit each year, with [a half day dedicated to diversity and inclusion](#). CEO and Chairman Marty Barrington kicked off one session with a personal story about his immigrant grandparents and his own experiences being welcomed by people from different backgrounds at law school. “I want every single employee in our company to feel welcomed like that,” he said.

Make the Business Case: CEOs and senior leaders “get it” more quickly when they see how diversity and inclusion help them realize their business goals. Those who have the opportunity to come before senior leaders should always link diversity efforts to improved recruitment, retention and talent development, and to better customer/client relationships.

Involve Them as [Mentors](#) and [Executive-Resource-Group Sponsors](#): When senior executives are directly involved with helping people from underrepresented groups succeed, they often learn what it’s like “to walk in someone else’s shoes” and become much more involved in other diversity initiatives.



Guided Questions for Employees

» **Have your senior managers demonstrated visible support for diversity and inclusion?**

Are there quotes on your website and content on your intranet from them showing their support?

» **Do you think it’s important for them to be diversity leaders?**

Have they ever shared personal stories about their connection to the subject? How did that make you feel?

» **Have you had a mentor?**

If so, what did you and the mentor learn about each other and each other’s backgrounds? Did it change the way either of you behaved in the organization?

2 REACHING MIDDLE MANAGERS

The most important ways to [reach middle managers](#) are to have clear messaging from the top, link diversity to business goals, use employee resource groups to make the connection, and make cultural-competence training mandatory.

For many companies, the most effective way to reach middle managers is through training that focuses on hidden biases and gets to the heart of why they don't feel or act inclusive. It's particularly important to train recruiters and line supervisors and to involve resource groups as much as possible in designing and implementing the training.

For these managers, making the business case is also important so they can understand why expanding the pie will lead to more opportunity and greater benefit to everyone, rather than taking something away from them.

Sharon Harvey Davis, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at Ameren (No. 3 in [DiversityInc's Top 7 Utilities](#)), says her company "always assumes that white men want to be involved." This includes frequently highlighting supportive white men at all levels in the bimonthly diversity newsletter.

Guided Questions for Employees

» **Are there middle managers in your organization who don't seem to understand how diversity and inclusion help everyone?**

What would you tell them in your efforts to convince them? What would help you to know before talking to them?

» **How much interaction do your middle managers have with employee resource groups?**

Are they consulted when employees want to join these groups? Do they know the benefits to the business these groups bring? Are they encouraged to become personally involved?

» **Are diversity goals linked to their performance reviews?**

Is it clear to them that their engagement with diversity and inclusion is directly linked to business success and, therefore, to their own performance objectives?

3 REFUTING NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

What should you say when you get pushback from white men on their involvement in and/or the benefits of diversity and inclusion? Michele C. Green, Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer at [Prudential Financial](#) (No. 8 in the DiversityInc Top 50), advises you to do your homework. “We have to be really careful and thoughtful in communications. We tell them we do want a diverse workforce that includes everyone, but that does not mean it’s just people of color or women.”

Brassell says arguments that this doesn’t include them or that there’s no value in it for them or the organization can be countered with the business case. And he advises companies to challenge assumptions by “seeing our blind spots and the opportunity white men have to create and sustain inclusive environments.”

For the ultimate answer to whether a white man can be a diversity leader, please see DiversityInc CEO Luke Visconti’s column [“Can a White Man Speak With Authority on Diversity?”](#)

Guided Questions for Employees

» What would you say if a white, male employee told you he didn’t understand why diversity matters to your company?

» What would you tell him if he stated that he felt that if a person from an underrepresented group were hired or promoted, it would take something away from him?

NEXT MONTH

National Hispanic Heritage Month for all employees and CEO Commitment for diversity staff, diversity-council members, employee-resource-group leaders, and HR/communications staff.