

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING REPORT

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM
THE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING TEAM

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INTRODUCTION

Diversity and Inclusion

By Melba J. Duncan

Imagine a society in which everyone belongs.

Our workplace is the perfect setting for a national hiring strategy to occur to build a culture of shared responsibility, and to practice the principle of inclusion, thereby addressing the challenge of letting go of how we see the world: by race, by gender, by the power of wealth, by poverty and by religious beliefs. Here is our opportunity to offer equity and social advantage to those who contribute to our economic prosperity.

What are we experiencing?

Interpretation drives action. The development of explicit, shared understanding of standards and rules, with particular change of emphasis in the way hiring is conducted, must be made concrete, acknowledged and individualized by persons charged with their administrative execution.

Change will occur when there is removal of moral doubt in individuals' conceptions, and when institutional realities led by corporate voices confirm, with unanimous consent, that now is the time to consider what are the fundamental attitudes and common values that we must exemplify in our global workplace to redefine the terms of hire, and to acknowledge individual contribution, regardless of race or heritage, with a commitment to equity, and shared values. Our past actions defaulted in implementing these defining equality and impartial perspectives. It is our present and our future actions that must provide overwhelming reassurance that these distinctions will disappear when we offer a new outlook that exemplifies mutual respect for the equality of each individual and confirm that these actions are to our mutual advantage. The stage is set.

The deepest and most misunderstood impact of racial distinctions in hiring practices demand that meaningful change would be realized by creating a qualitatively different approach. When there is a moral vision to create and implement an inclusive national hiring strategy, such diversity appreciation would enable a prosperous economy. Consider a unanimous multidimensional strategy to repel our specific vulnerabilities to human differences. An option to consider is to introduce a complete transformation of our workplace practices, committed to procedures, interests and ideals, with new principles and attitudes to be introduced and enforced. We are inspired by executive leaders who set these standards for achievement and contribution, and who educate us by leading these changes in a precise and clear direction.

We need change, accompanied by a transformation of belief, that drives action. What I am advocating is that we confirm the cumulative impact of who we have been (and are being), and with that knowledge, formulate an action plan to disrupt this established workplace societal (not-so-silent) structure, with timelines and accountability from Business Leaders who

are fearless, and who have the wisdom and the power to direct us in how to resolve these long-term structural problems.

Crises are opportunities. Let us put into place processes, that lead to reliable change. We applaud those global Business Leaders who respond to these moments and reveal their character by setting the standards for achievement and contribution. We do have leaders in place who are recognized for their ability to bring about the changes we need. Now is not the time for hope. Now is the time for enforced change.

We know the importance of matching job functions with Executive personality, expectations and goals. In this process, we encounter a disturbing reality in our workplaces where racial differences drive decisions, and opinions, rather than knowledge, skills, personality or characteristics that will produce brilliant work. Change will occur with strong, culturally focused, and committed Executive Leaders.

What is ultimately at issue is our willingness to accept the premise that we are all responsible for the actions we exemplify, the decisions we make and the behaviours that we allow. We each need to ask ourselves, what is the impact of societal distinctions on me? How can each one of us be part of the struggle to make our hiring practices more just and thereby preserve the human dignity? How do we remind ourselves that behavioural habit influences every thought, feeling and action we exemplify? When we witness these distinguishing practices, we should be responding to the element of surprise, not of acceptance. Imagine a society in which everyone belongs.

This is an opportunity for all of us to show moral leadership and thereby to realize a transformation of our global workplace practices. These actions will introduce and enforce new principles and attitudes. Global executive leaders, who set the standards for achievement and contribution, will lead these changes in a precise and clear direction.

We have a choice. We can choose to respect and appreciate the interconnectedness of humanity. Life is not about avoiding challenges; it is about overcoming adversity. We will be greater for it. There is a bright future ahead of us.

THE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING TEAM

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PURPOSE

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

We represent a multiplicity of voices, creeds, races, disabilities, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and beliefs that are bold, challenging and successful worldwide. Yet we do not reflect the diversity of those voices in our industry across the board.

In their book *Inclusive Leadership*, Charlotte Sweeney and Fleur Bothwick have a comprehensive definition of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion that is characterised as:

“Equality is being invited to the room.

Diversity is about every single person. Everyone is unique and their perspectives are different, based on lots of influences, such as their own life experiences, culture, learning styles, personality type, education, etc. It is also getting a seat at the table.

Inclusion is about creating an environment where everyone can be themselves, feel that they are able to contribute their views and that these will be valued. It is equally, sharing your views and being heard. An inclusive leader enables all of this to happen.”

Belonging

In further research, Leila McKenzie Delis contemplates that there is a missing link to these three definitions, or a missing part of the equation: **Belonging**.

In her book *Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging*, she explains that “diversity alone does not drive inclusion. The capability of diversity is unlocked by inclusion towards engagement. As such, inclusivity and belonging unlock the potential of every person.”

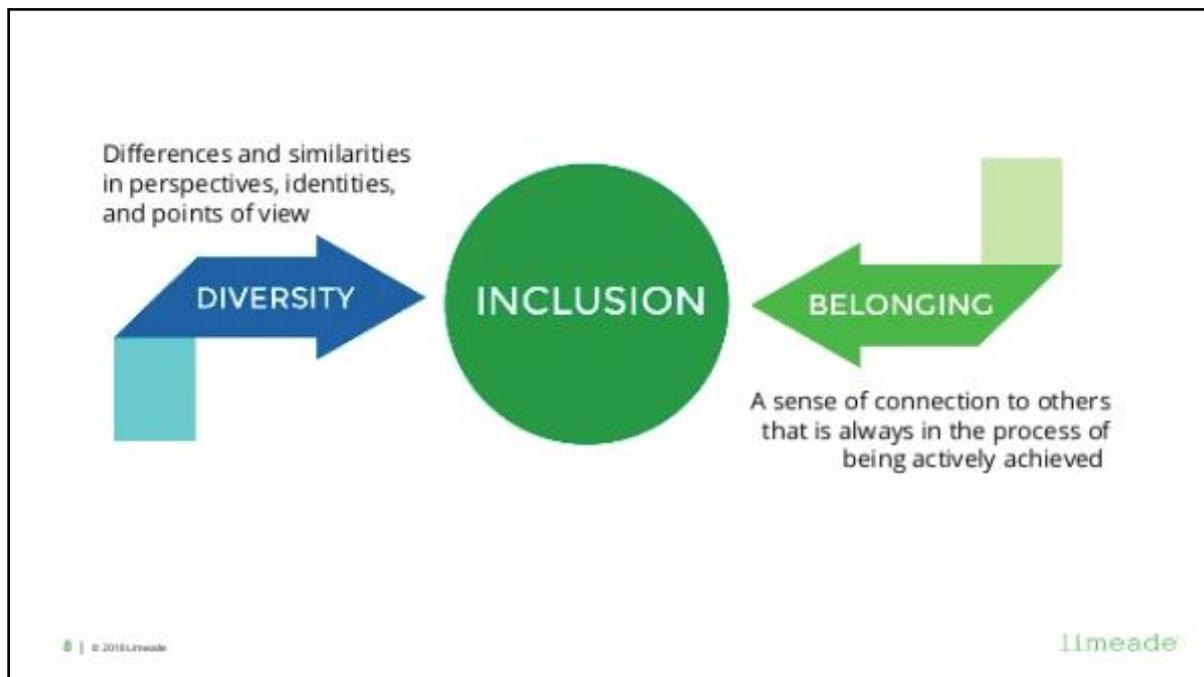
In the foreword of her book by Jinlong Wang defines two layers which we found extremely relevant in relation to the aims of this study:

“Belonging is one of the most important seeing values in life and being accepted totally for who you are and what you stand for.

Community beyond one’s family, workplace and community is where we spend the majority of our time and life. Instead of individuals being concerned about their differences we should be embracing these unique traits in order to harness the good that humankind has to offer.”

And that is our mission. To enable those rich diverse voices to participate at our table, establish inclusive networks, encourage actionable allyship, promote visibility, recognise the value of overlapping experiences of identity, to provide mentoring and sponsorship, encourage reverse mentorship and defeat unconscious bias, nurturing a fully inclusive global community.

According to Human Synergistics article [How to build an Inclusive Culture in your workplace](#), “Inclusion is a sense of belonging, connection and community at work”, as succinctly illustrated in the image below.



Questioning Ourselves

There is so much more that unites us, than what divides us.

After intense roundtable discussions, research and data gathering around Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging issues, the next step for the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Team authoring this report was to try to find answers to these important questions:

- Why do we have such a low margin of diverse engagement and representation in our sector?
- In turning inward and questioning ourselves, how do we perceive our community and measure our statistics?
- Why are we as an industry not proportionally inclusive of our diversity? Equally, why is the industry not engaged and committed to creating change?
- Do we ourselves need to re-skill or upskill ourselves in order to be effective agents of change?
- What skills and competences do we require to address our own biases? How can we encourage others to be actionable allies speaking out, even if there is no one with protected characteristics in the room to hear?

What we cannot afford, is to fall into the unity trap of ‘filling the gap’ and adding to the quotas.

In his [article](#) on *Tokenism*, Stephen Uba plainly states that “solidarity is poisonous when it only uses minority voices to increase its visibility, but later on fails to amplify those voices.”

Representation is not only crucial for social justice, equity, and equality, but also, and most importantly, for those who are role models to others early on in their career paths, providing that inspiration and visibility to those who are following on.

Collectively, we all have a social responsibility to make it right, because we can. We can pave the way for generations to come, expanding their potential and leaving the pile a little bit higher than we found.

In [McKinsey's Delivering Through Diversity Report 2018](#) there is a matrix of strategy and actions they call 'Imperatives to deliver inclusive growth' that clearly illustrates step-by-step actions from idea to impact which are tremendously thought-provoking and well worth observing.



A Safe Space for Conversations and Discussions

Our ambition is to be provocative and work with colleagues in the sector to create a platform – a safe space - to open and facilitate the conversation around inclusion, diversity and belonging.

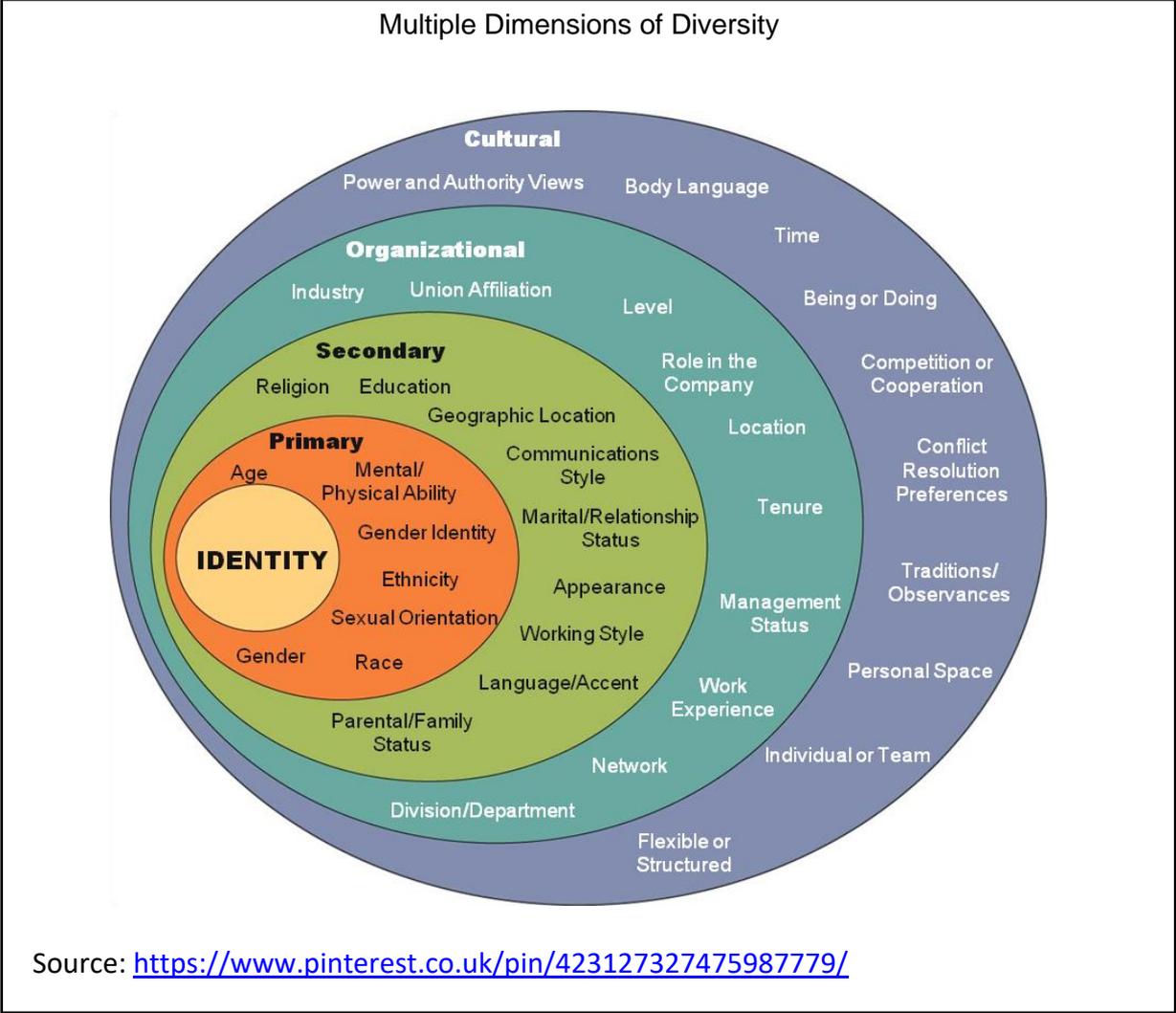
The aim is to reinforce the sense of belonging, and that we should passionately participate and influence the role of the Assistant (administrative professionals) within the industry globally, together in balanced representation. By having these conversations now and acting upon them we create a hope for the future that the generations that follow on no longer have to face the issues we are experiencing now. Ensuring that the very rich and diverse fabric of what we represent in the world and what we stand for, is truly and equally represented in our community worldwide is critical.

We are not policy makers, but each of us can certainly move and shake within our industry to bring about change, representation, diversity and inclusion. Most importantly, to use Diversity & Inclusion as an enabler of business impact, innovation and growth. It is imperative to remember that we are each highly influential individuals with far reaching spheres of influence

within the workplace, in our networks, amongst our peers and globally in this social media connected world we live in.

With an inclusive frame of mind these recommendations are only a starting point with a framework of ideas open for discussion, improvement, and adjusting or adapting to each reality.

The primary objective is that we guarantee a sustained effort to ensure that every single person in our global network has their voice heard and actively contributes and commits to the making of a more diverse and inclusive Industry, because #WeBelong.



CONSULTATION

The fact is that the world has become this Global Hub. A melting pot of cultures, yet the Administrative Profession’s leadership, bodies, attendance at conferences and networks are not proportionally representative and inclusive of such diversity.

As a starting point, the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Team decided to conduct a survey to *feel the pulse* and help us to understand and establish why representation is so low at such events, amongst our professional bodies, and in positions of leadership within the assistant industry.

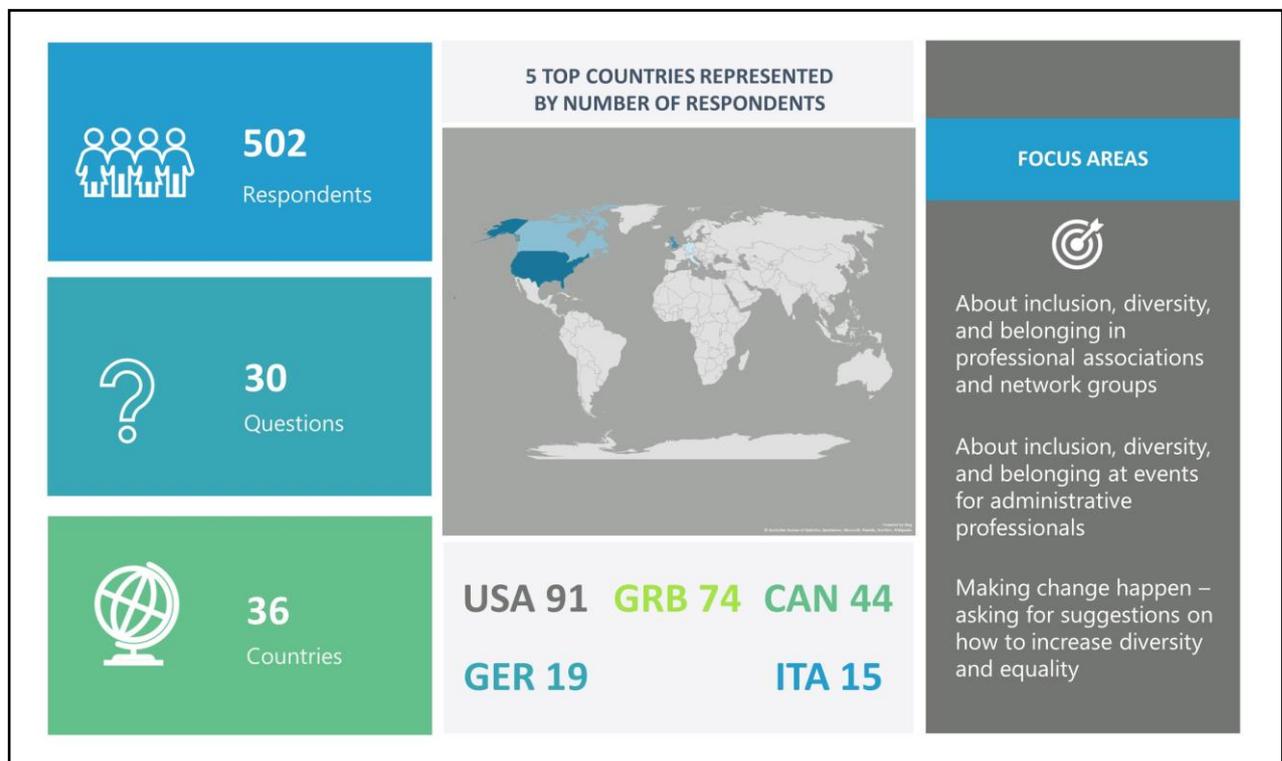
- Is it a choice? Is it cost? Lack of motivation? Lack of sense of belonging? And if so, why? Feel intimidated? Imposter syndrome? Trust? What deters people within the different dimensions of the diversity spectrum in our community to join the conversation?

The survey *Inclusion, Diversity, and Belonging* was conducted in December-March 2021 and had 503 respondents from around the world. This feedback has been invaluable in providing the data and knowledge needed to understand the different experiences and perspectives of our respondents in order for us to comprehend the current state of play for administrative professionals in our industry. That information informs this paper and, as a group, it will be discussed further in a round table at the World Administrators Summit. There will also be a Q&A and feedback session from attendees to really animate the discussion around our findings and possible action for the future.

We would strongly encourage additional research to be carried out by Associations and Network bodies locally in their own time, in order to continue this work but reflecting the diversity dimensions of each local reality and dynamic.

Executive Summary on the Survey on Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging

This report summarises the key findings of all responses shared on Survey Monkey for diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the administrative professional networks and association, and analysis is deducted from the findings. No specific names have been disclosed in the report nor specific branches mentioned.



The project aimed to meet the following objectives:

1. Identify the key opportunities and challenges with regards to diversity and inclusion within Administrative Professional Networks and Associations.
2. Provide insights on these challenges.
3. Make key recommendations on how they can resolve these issues.

Findings and Analysis

The majority of the respondents were women (comprising of 96% of the respondents) with more than half of them being from western countries. There were fewer responses from younger (18-25 years) professionals and those that are differently-abled (only 4% of the respondents were differently-abled).

The feedback shows that there is the sense that we professionals are comfortable to air our concerns and feel heard and listened to which culminates in a greater sense of appreciation for the majority of respondents. On average at least 50% of all responses related to value, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, relayed positive results around feeling valued. The main thematic challenge around value was that there was need for those in leadership positions to uphold and promote factors related to member's, employee, and peer values.

The survey does not capture a lot of views from the younger generation (below the age of 35), with 93.7% of the respondents aged between 35-75 years. As such the survey may not truly portray the views and opinions of the younger professionals. This may correlate to the countries that predominantly filled the survey having wider aging populations. This could also be attributed to a lack of access to or interest in the survey or professional networks or associations. It is highly recommended that a strategy is developed to include and reach younger professionals in future.

There seems to be a gender gap between the males and females within the profession with 96.3% of the responses coming from females. There is little male representation and very little representation of the marginalised and stigmatised gender identities (gender neutral, non-binary, etc.) based on the statistical analysis of the responses received. The generalisation of the other gender identities on the survey questions could pose a reason for the marginalised groups not to fully reveal their identity and as such the gender aspect may not be completely accurate when it comes to highlighting the views of these groups.

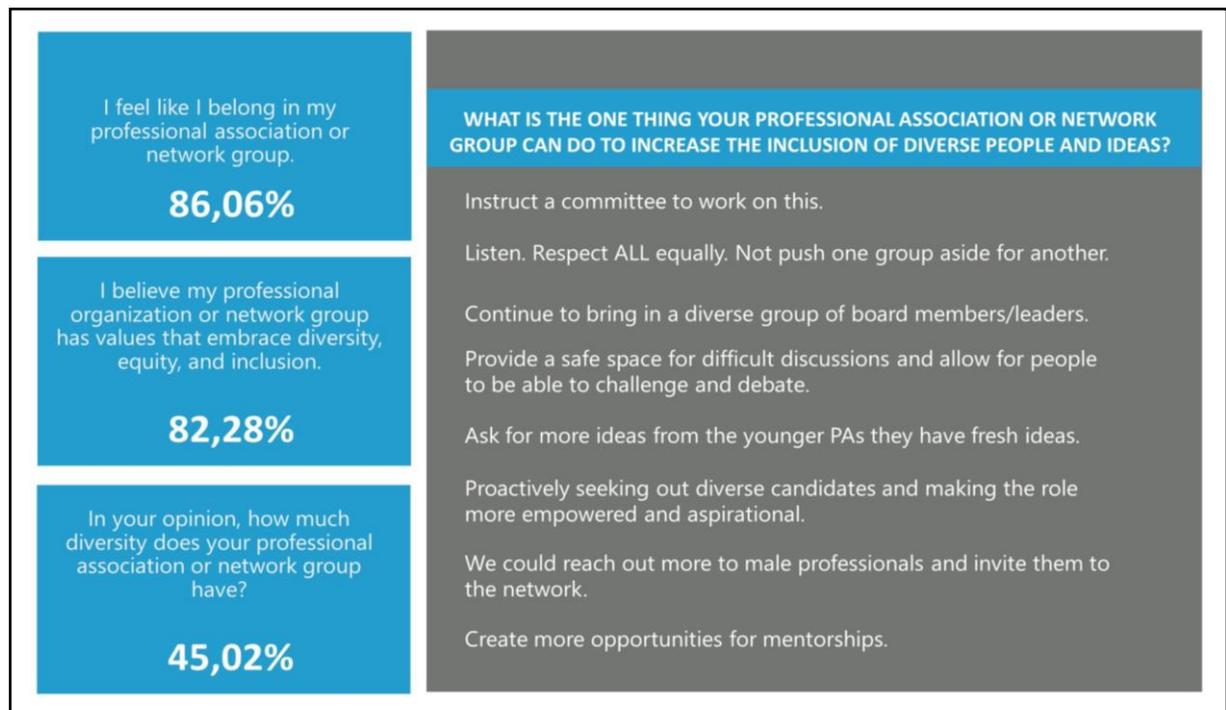
General recommendations

- More learning and development aspects when it comes to diversity, inclusion and belonging such as workshops, seminars, webinars etc.
- A need for authenticity on the *real issues* around diversity and inclusion and it should not just be looked at and addressed as a blanket approach to issues facing professionals.
- Diversity and inclusion issues need to be prioritised and not a tick box exercise.
- Creation of a safe space for professionals to address diversity, inclusion, and belonging issues without being marginalised or punitive measures being taken against those who speak up.

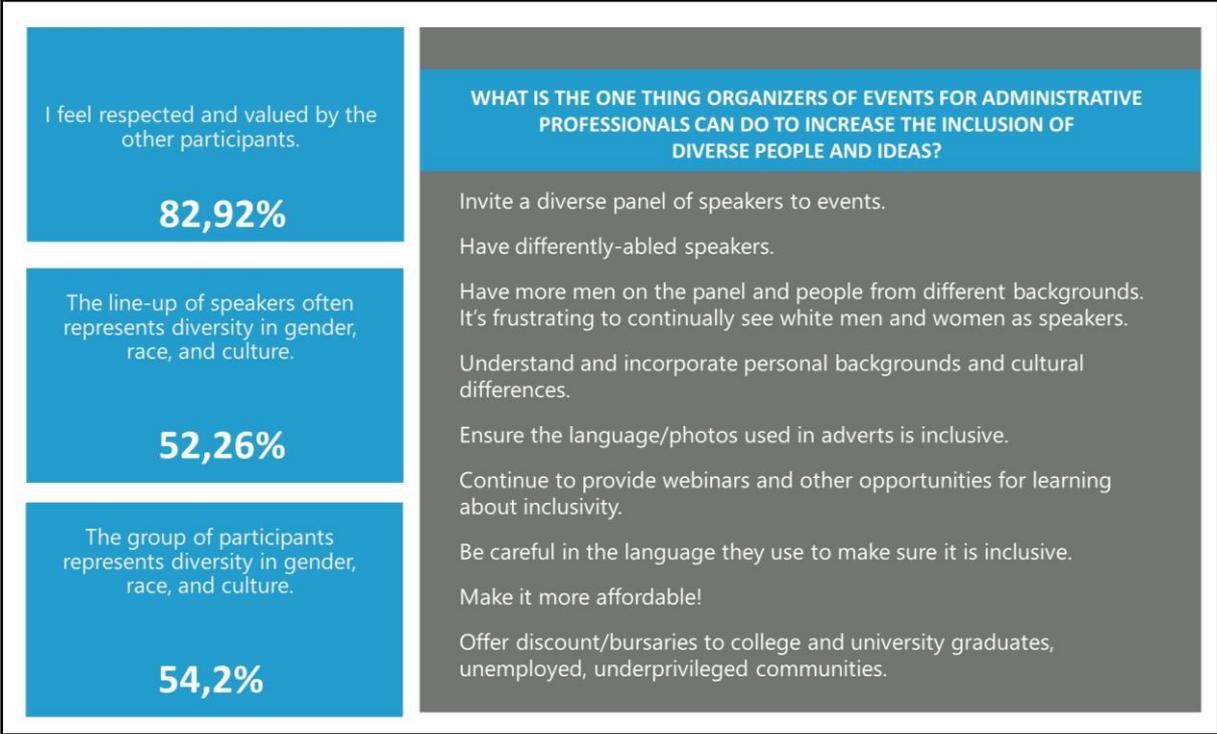
- Inclusion of men in forums and promoting the involvement of men within the profession as it is predominantly perceived as a female profession.
- Encouraging a culture of belonging.
- Regular and ongoing communication around diversity, inclusion, and belonging as a daily occurrence should be paramount to increase awareness.
- C- Suite professionals should be included in diversity, inclusion, and belonging debates and forums to better their understanding of the real issues around the topic that face employees.

The overall results on inclusion, diversity, and belonging in professional associations and network groups show that most respondents reported that they do feel a sense of belonging to their associations or network groups. To the question *in your opinion, how much diversity does your professional association or network group have?* Less than half answered that they believe there is *a great deal of diversity or a lot of diversity*. 35.6% answered *a moderate amount of diversity*. The suggestions presented by the respondents for improvements in this focus area show the following needs:

- Create platforms for discussions to allow everyone to speak up and be heard.
- Work strategically in widening the pool of recruitment: male professionals, younger members, and diversity in culture, geographic location (country regions), socio-economic background, and education level.
- Encouragement of inclusive leadership in the board of the associations and network groups.
- Offer training and education opportunities and share information on the topic to increase awareness.
- Conduct members surveys.
- Give support through mentorship programmes.



In the focus area of inclusion, diversity, and belonging at events for administrative professionals, the numbers show room for improvement, especially regarding diversity in gender, race, and culture in the line-up of speakers and participants attending events.



We would encourage everyone reading this report to access the complete survey results including the answers to the open questions here: [Survey Inclusion, Diversity, and Belonging - Responses | SurveyMonkey](#)

The survey questions can be copied and used by professional associations and network groups.

What Gets Measured Gets Done!

AWARENESS

To help us awaken our own awareness try the following exercise with your colleagues or within your networks — it may help you to realise the diversity within our own communities when you see this visible representation of who is affected by these inclusivity issues. The idea is that you start with both hands held up in front of you and you put down one finger each time one of the statements below relate to you:

1. *If you were ever uncomfortable about a comment or joke related to your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation but felt unable to confront the situation.*
2. *If you have need to have adjustments made to accommodate an invisible or physical disability in your transportation, home or workplace.*
3. *If you have to speak a different language at work than your first language.*
4. *If you didn't attend a private or fee-paying school.*
5. *If people get your name wrong and find it difficult to remember.*
6. *If you are not able to show affection to your partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence.*
7. *If you have ever worried that being a parent will have a negative impact on your career and opportunities.*
8. *If you are sometimes asked to speak for the whole of the community you identify with, whether based on ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender or disability.*
9. *If most people in the senior management team look different to you.*
10. *If you would hesitate to call the police when trouble occurs for fear of being treated unjustly.*

This exercise is enormously powerful when looking around at colleagues and getting visual feedback on their experiences. It can also lead to meaningful discussions and sharing of experiences.

The question remains: Why were we not more aware or mindful of these scenarios before? We are sharing this as we think that is something we can all learn from.

RECOMMENDATIONS

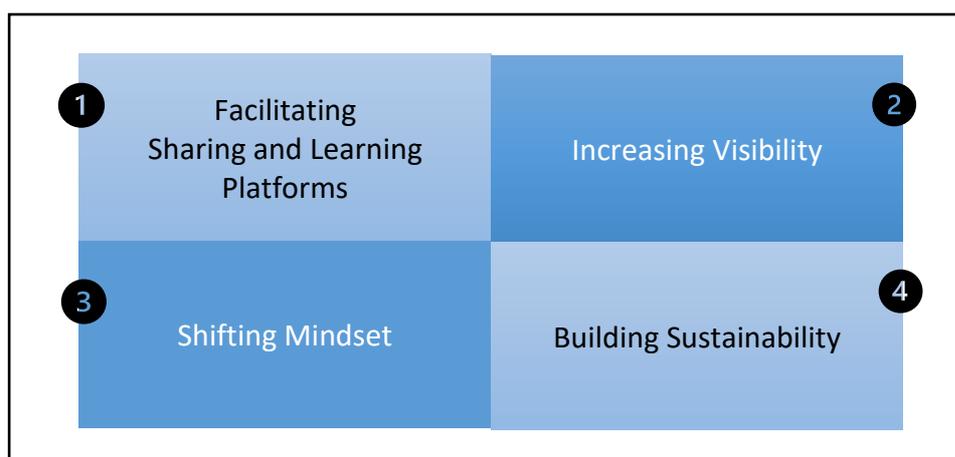
Inclusion First

It is the responsibility of all of us in our organisations to promote the inclusion of administrative professionals regardless of what protected characteristics may be attributed to them. The framework of organisations often means that we sit alongside the business, so are often only viewed as executors — the people who make things happen but not as participants. Due to this, the mindset of organisations is that we are only called upon when things need to be carried out. We are not generally included or considered when it comes to training, mentoring, development, career management, etc. As administrative professionals it may not only be our skin tone that holds us back, but as a group, no matter our race, gender, or ability, we are often limited as a community because of the mindset of those around us as to what our ‘roles’ are. For male administrative professionals and those of colour, this adds another layer of complexity.

Belonging comes from knowing your ‘Why’ – your purpose. If you know what your purpose is within an organisation, this helps support your sense of belonging. Alongside this, organisations need to adjust their mindsets. Administration is a foundational element of any firm, no matter the size and we, administrators, are a key driving force in the success of our organisations. If this is not deemed as important, in the same way that the operational aspect of a firm under COO function is deemed important, one’s sense of belonging can be diminished due to the struggle of having to constantly justify why administrative professionals should be included and what the benefits of our contributions can be.

It is important that as a community, we create a sense of belonging amongst one another. We should be raising each other up and while we do see evidence of this occurring it is far from widespread. As a group made up in the majority of women, this can be an issue as we tend to be overly critical of ourselves. We need to avoid this and rather seek out the strengths so that we build the visibility and presence of our profession within our organisations. We can think about our own mindsets and the language that we use. How can we change negatives to positive actions? Instead of saying ‘I’m sorry I...’ rephrase it positively. Too often we say sorry when we have done nothing wrong and as a result, we could be perpetuating certain stereotypes, for example that Asians are subservient.

As a result of the outcome of the consultation, we present below four recommendations that can be implemented in order to encourage presence, promote talent and amplify our plethora of diverse voices. They are equally important and should be part of any diversity, inclusion, and belonging strategy.



Set of Recommendations #1 – Facilitating Sharing and Learning Platforms

1.1. ANNUAL CONFERENCES: Run annual conferences on the topic, gathering all professional organisations and networks. October is Global Diversity Awareness Month. Why not benefit from the existing initiatives? It is important that we as administrative professionals share growth opportunities with one another.

Offer conference bursaries targeting:

1. Graduates
2. The unemployed
3. Potential/proactive/keen, rising or already established professionals

We would hope that following the dissemination of this report that conference organisers and those who run events for administrative professionals can recognise systematic inequalities faced by some of us and understand the impact of micro-aggressions that have been real lived experiences for many administrative professionals. If organisations can listen and self-reflect, they can also influence change. Having Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging on the agenda at a conference should not be a tick box exercise. As a community, administrative professionals can build trust, uphold consistency of practice, and be accountable.

1.2. HAVE A POOL OF EXPERTS: Help professional organisations put Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging on the agenda by offering a pool of experts on the topic. We need to discuss the topic and have all ethnicities share their reflections and experiences. It will enhance empathy and help people put themselves in other's shoes. We need to speak up. Also listen to what everyone has to say about Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Create a bank of specialisms with mentors and volunteers identified per country to allocate in the categories listed below as examples:

1. Career Progress Strategy
2. Project Management & Productivity
3. Digital Geeks & Tech
4. Motivation, Innovation & Drive Ambassadors
5. Corporate Governance & Cybersecurity
6. Entrepreneurship
7. VA
8. Premium: top senior leaders in our industry

1.3. CREATE PLATFORMS FOR SHARING AND LEARNING: Where administrative professionals can share stories, give a voice to successful people representing diversity in its different forms. We have never had so many opportunities to attend webinars, produce podcasts, and meet digitally as now, so let us make the most of these platforms to further Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging goals.

1.4. BRANDING DIVERSITY: Have branding campaigns (associations, events), showing diversity in gender, race, age, demography, etc. There are still many associations and network groups

creating advertisements with only female administrative professionals or using flowers, pink colours or other so called 'feminine' attributes – change is needed.

Set of Recommendations #2 - Increasing Visibility

What we, as the Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Team, thought imperative and effective, was to keep the focus to the central point of our research and to help us keep the alignment with our aims. Below are some relevant questions that guided us:

How can we promote and increase visibility of the diverse fabric our industry is made of in an inclusive meaningful manner? Furthermore, how can we help create a sense of belonging?

2.1. #ScoutForTalent #PromoteAndIncludeDiversity #WeBelong

Create promotional profiles celebrating diversity in our industry, reflecting Race, Gender, Ability, Age, Creed, Social across all social media platforms and in our press.

Working with local associations or scouting for talent at conferences, within the local community, via online networks and asking for recommendations. These would be the unseen, unheard of administrative professionals that would not otherwise be noticed.

Promoting these individuals could be done through interviews or self-written articles. We can elevate inspirational figures from underrepresented groups to demonstrate positive reinforcement of their achievements and inspire them to relate personal stories of overcoming problems and engaging with success. This not only promotes visibility but also shines a light on how talent is thriving and imparts their experience of making a difference for themselves and others in our profession.

Criteria:

Passion/Purpose for the profession
Disruptor
Driven
Committed

Extra Factor in one of the areas:

Tech
Creative
Innovator
Motivational
Project Management
Writer

This is an incentive that would not only celebrate the uniqueness in every administrative professional, but also empower and create a sense of inclusiveness and belonging.

A strong message from senior/top influencers, movers and shakers that simply says: come and sit at the table with us — this is a safe space for all of us; have your voice heard; we belong together, and we will advocate for you and with you.

Set of Recommendations #3 – Shifting Mindset

From the perspective of shifting the mindset, how can we look at ways intersectionality can enrich and strengthen communities? And consider how the multidimensional identity can be a seed for innovation and growth?

To alter mindsets, we need to be in the presence of the mindsets we want to shift. We cannot do this by ourselves, in the same way that gender, race, disability, sexual orientation programs were not limited to those communities. Allyship is incredibly important.

We are aware that minds do need to be changed in our own community of administrative professionals, but more importantly they need to be changed outside of it, so that those people who have the power to support our profession see and comprehend our impact.

If we look at our profession, are we connecting with organisations and networks beyond administration? We should be connecting with organisations who support women, gender, race, disability, etc., because they all know what it is like to feel discrimination. They can provide us with knowledge, support, and advocacy to have our voices heard in spaces where we may not normally have a seat at the table.

We can do this both as individuals and network leaders. We should not be isolating ourselves in the hope that we alone as administrative professionals can solve the issue. We cannot because we are not in positions of power to do so. In the same way Black colleagues need everyone to be behind the call for racial equality and equity, we need everyone to be behind the push for intellectual equality and professionalisation when it comes to the role of the administrative professional.

3.1. IDENTIFYING REAL STORIES and sharing negative experiences are an engaging way to illustrate people's issues. Mentoring can also be key here in raising confidence of those who have felt held back and that their race has been a hindrance rather than a benefit in their careers. It would be cathartic to also share negative experiences that have affected us in order to illuminate how we have overcome those hardships giving hope and offering solidarity to those faced with similar situations. It is important to acknowledge that the pain people have felt is real and should be recognised but also that we do not want it to hold us back and keep us from moving forward in our careers.

3.2. STORYTELLING AND ROLE MODELING are powerful tools to show how individuals can be change-makers. We need to create arenas where professionals can tell how their diversity, as each one of us is a mosaic of diversity, are adding value to the workplace and to communities. Companies are succeeding in recognising the power of diversity, so we need to bring our employers to the conversations. As professionals, we are part of a workforce, in addition to professional organisations and network groups.

3.3 TRAINING: Offer e-learning training and conversations on diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Why Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging matter to the sustainability of our profession?

4.1. EXPANDING THE SENSE OF BELONGING: When we experience the sense of belonging at work, we feel stronger to create this sense of belonging in the professional organisations and network groups we are a part of.

To make our profession sustainable, professional associations and network groups have to mirror the diversity of our workplaces, neighbourhoods, and families. Globalisation has made cities, countries, and companies, global arenas. “A diverse mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions, and outcomes for everyone.” - Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google67.

4.2. EMBED DIVERSITY IN THE ASSOCIATION CULTURE: The global workforce is aging and becoming more ethnically and gender diverse. Therefore, professional associations and network groups should also embrace diversity and inclusion to ensure growth and sustainability. There is no future without diversity, inclusion, and belonging. “Diversity in the world is a basic characteristic of human society, and also the key condition for a lively and dynamic world as we see today.” – Jintao Hu

4.3. DIVERSE LEADERSHIP IN OUR ASSOCIATIONS: Research shows that global workforces contribute to creativity, innovation, and new ways of thinking influenced by different cultural beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. So, we need to help associations have values that embrace diversity, inclusion, and belonging. By doing that, they will attract new members representing the diverse fabric our industry is made of. It includes having diversity in the leadership teams, in the event line-up of speakers, and events audiences. Where there is a lack of diversity in leadership allyship becomes even more important. We require these leaders as our allies to recognise their privilege, be prepared to have uncomfortable conversations and listen without prejudice. Often underrepresented people feel that they cannot speak out for fear of jeopardizing their position and career prospects or because the inappropriate behaviour is articulated by someone in a position of power BUT leaders can transform this unacceptable behaviour into a positive learning experience by challenging it when they see and hear it.

4.4. INCLUDE DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING IN THE STRATEGY PLAN: Let’s not forget the Millennials, who want to see a diverse representation of people, thoughts, and working styles from the top levels of an organization on down to the front lines. They evaluate how well an organization walks its DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION talk. They also want to help shape the organisation, giving them a sense of purpose and an opportunity to develop professionally. They gravitate toward employers that invest in robust social responsibility programs addressing some of the world’s most vexing problems, including climate change, human rights abuses, and economic inequality. We can only conclude that to attract these forward thinkers and maintain a sustainable profession, organisations have to include diversity in order to future proof itself strategically.

4.5. ENSURE DIVERSITY IN THE BOARD OF THE ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORK GROUPS: An integral component of sustainability is the ability to embrace diverse communities and the unique voices they support – e.g., whenever asked to recruit new people ensure that you have a representative panel from different cultures as there is nothing like promoting a diverse and

inclusive workforce and respecting what they bring to the table. Be receptive to new ideas and encourage knowledge sharing.

4.6. WE NEED FACTS. To convince others, we need to combine facts as well as feelings. The majority of the global workforce feels isolated and disconnected from their jobs. There are many reports on that, including from Gallup. Their figures are supporting great corporate decision-making. Where are our reports, figures, facts? Are administrative professionals being impacted by feeling disconnected from their jobs and professional associations and network groups? We need also to use storytelling to back-up the facts.

CONCLUSION

To ensure that associations and network groups can feel the isolation and disconnection gap that some of its members feel, we need to create awareness movements, evaluate how associations and network groups are operating, conduct extensive surveys, discuss issues with stakeholders, implement procedures, and define common goals. It needs to be an ongoing exercise of development.

We hope this report will help administrative associations and network groups to put the topic Diversity, Inclusion, Equality, and Belonging on the agenda as part of their strategic actions to support the sustainability of our profession. For those who are already actively discussing the topic and implementing change, we hope this report will encourage them to share knowledge and contribute widely to a more inclusive community of administrative professionals.

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Finally, to our dynamic network, thank you for engaging and responding to our survey. This work is just the beginning of a collective and intentional action to increase awareness and encourage the implementation of many Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging initiatives.

Together we are stronger!