

Building a Better Base: *Creating Inclusive Organizations*



"Here are my people going;
let me follow them because I am the
leader"

Gandhi

What is an inclusive organization?

People cannot be inspired and energized with memos, mission statements, data, charts, goals, objectives, measurements, systems, and processes alone. While these are important tools for improving performance, an organization that is inclusive has the capacity to unleash human potential, so that individual and collective creativity and innovation can flourish.

An inclusive organization links its parts into a cohesive whole. It employs interactive processes that build an environment of inclusiveness. Webster's dictionary defines inclusive as *including or taking into account*. The thesaurus provides the words *richness, completeness, breadth* and *abundance* as substitutes for inclusiveness.

Driving Forces

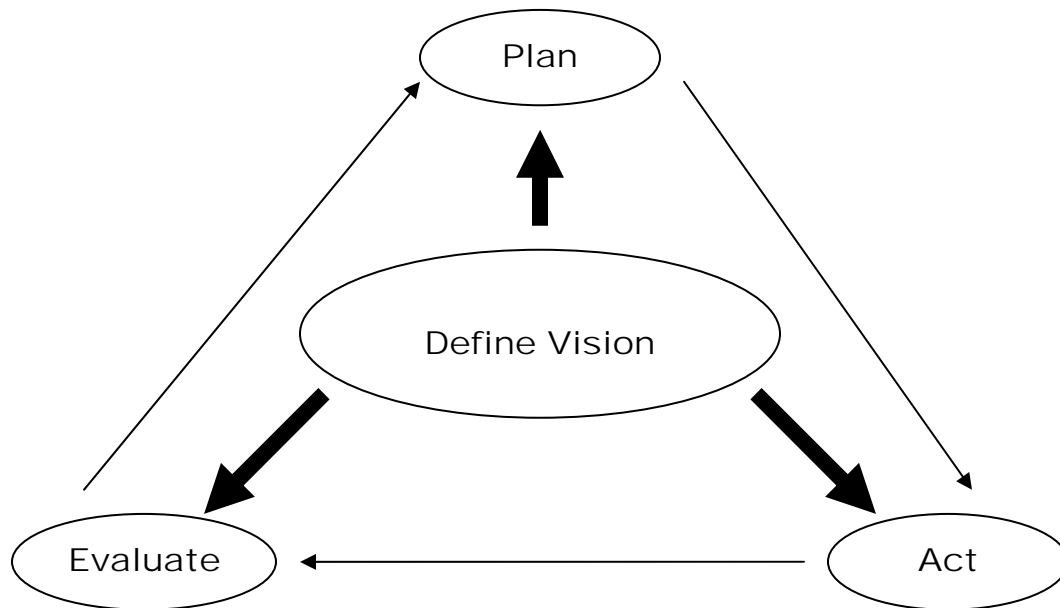
"In this chaotic world, we need leaders. But we don't need bosses. We need leaders to help us develop the clear identity that lights the dark moments of confusion. We need leaders to support us as we learn how to live by our values. We need leaders to understand that we are best controlled by concepts that invite our participation, not policies and procedures that curtail our contribution". Margaret L. Wheatley:

Leaders in organizations need to lead the way (vision/mission) through clarity (action and behaviour) that seeks to inspire, motivate and maintain an environment where everyone finds dignity, meaning and community at work. Leaders need to demonstrate an expression of self as truly their own to earn people's respect and commitment by consistently practicing a culture of inclusiveness; (teamwork, sharing, learning, leading and following).

Developing an inclusive organization

A. Create your Vision and Goals

Creating an organization's vision is an important part of the process of becoming an inclusive organization. This step allows members of the entire organization to look into the future, think creatively and ask themselves what they want their organization to be in 5-10 years. A vision describes an ideal picture. The vision guides goal-setting, policies and actions by providing context in which to understand the organization's concerns, prioritize issues, determine action steps and identify indicators to measure progress.



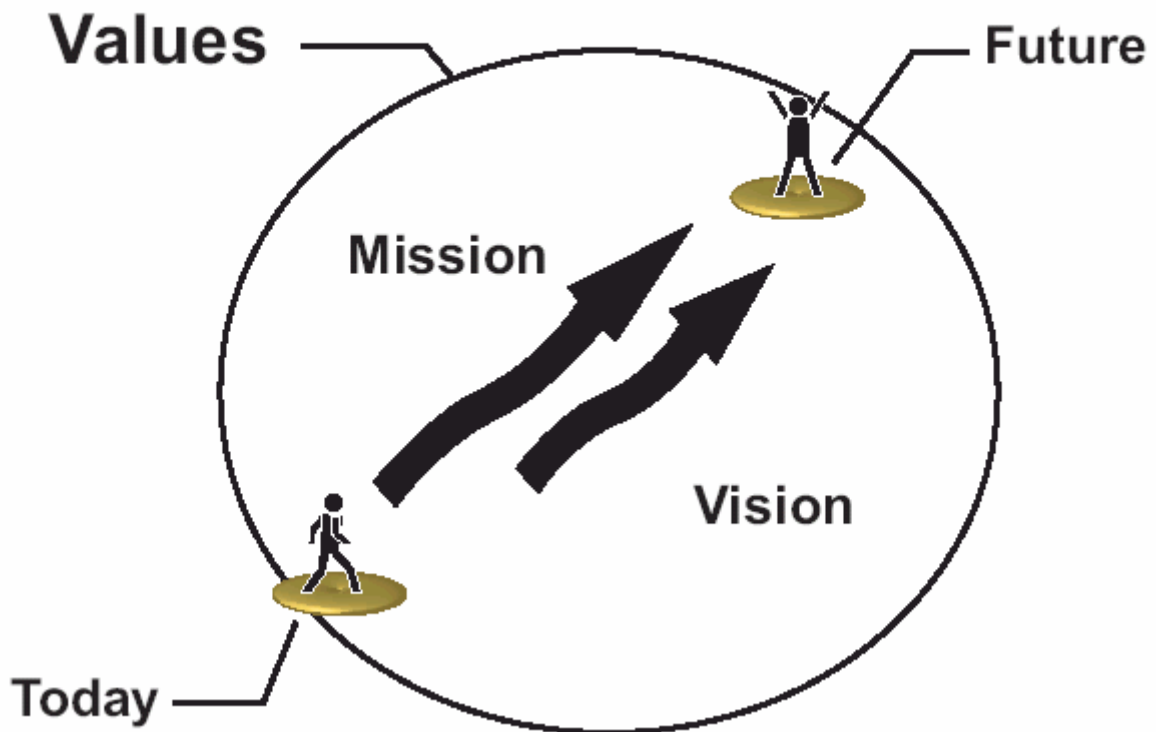
"The first job of a leader is to define a vision for the organization....Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality."

Warren Bennis

B. Align Your Vision

Vision Alignment:

- ⇒ Draws on the beliefs, mission, culture and general environment of the organization to achieve the desired future
- ⇒ Contributes to building loyalty through ownership
- ⇒ Encourages openness to unique and creative solutions



With a task, you can live in the present;
With a vision, you have hope for the future;
With a task and a vision, you can change the world.

Process to maintain an inclusive organization

1. Practice Appreciative Inquiry

What it is

- Appreciate
 - Valuing; the act of recognizing the best in people or the world around us. To affirm past and present strengths, successes and potentials. To perceive things that give life.
- Inquire
 - The act of exploration and discovery. To ask questions. To be open to seeing new potential and possibilities.

The Process

You will engage in "possibility conversations" with each other: about your organization in the community, its potential and "unique" contribution to the well-being of your client community.

You will shift from identifying problems to finding out about things at their best, so that you can discover ways to infuse more of what works into your organization's performance.

You will identify the best of "What is"; envision ideals of "What might be"; build consensus on "What should be" and facilitate the experience of "What can be".

2. Apply Core Values

Core values are your beliefs and principles that guide how you deliver your services, carry out your strategic vision, and guide the behaviour of your staff and other members of your organization.

They may include but are not limited to:

- Service with Integrity, Respect and Adherence to the Code of Conduct
- Accountability to All
- Anti-Racist operating framework
- Superior quality in service delivery
- Working together
- Open Management Style
- Achieving a balance in meeting the needs of all Stakeholders

3. Employ a Self-Directed Team Approach

"A perspective that recognizes the role of self-**leadership** for each employee is at the heart of this empowerment approach."

From: **Business Without Bosses**; Charles Manz; 1993 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Self-directed teams help minimize the "we-they syndrome", improve communication and build better teamwork in the organization.

Effective leaders focus on motivational conditions in an organization because they believe people want to work and do their best. They also act as if they work for their employees and not the other way around. As such, they are mostly concerned with facilitating processes and providing the tools, resources and information necessary to accomplish the tasks.

Coming together is a beginning;
Keeping together is a progress;
Working together is success.

Henry Ford

Strategies

"Every employee becomes a leader, at different times and in different situations."

From: **Maximizing the Value of 360-Degree Feedback**; Walter Tornow; 1998
Jossey-Bass

Organizations don't implement and execute strategies, people do!

- ⇒ Build the organization with the competencies, capabilities and resources to achieve the strategy (*efficiency*)
- ⇒ Establish policies and procedures to guide and facilitate activities that support organizational change, reduce resistance and build group effort (*execution*)
- ⇒ Develop information/operating systems that enable staff to carry out activities/roles proficiently (*technology/resources*)
- ⇒ Create incentives that rewards achievement (*recognition*)
- ⇒ Continue shaping the work environment by defining and reinforcing processes that support our activities (*culture*)
- ⇒ Practice sound internal leadership that supports continuous improvement (*leadership*)

Tips to maintain an inclusive organization

10 Actions for Leading or Creating an Inclusive Organization

1. **Set the vision:** Set the conditions in which employees will work and clarify the reasons why inclusion is important.
2. **Encourage a culture of collaboration:** Helps to define the pattern of behaviours and beliefs of the organization.
3. **Practice Leader as a Learner principle:** In order to act you must be willing to learn and understand and be willing to challenge yourself and grow.
4. **Appreciate:** Seek out opportunities to highlight what gives life to the organization and reinforce what is best about the organization.
5. **Inquire:** Seek out opportunities for conversation as most people are hunger for dialogue. Genuinely listen and inquire and share perspectives.
6. **Model inclusiveness:** Lead always by example; you can be gentle and still be bold in transforming your organization. Embrace the "we" vs. "I" mentality.
7. **Be a change agent.** Be an active advocate for the changes that are required to achieve inclusiveness. Develop and implement the change plan with the involvement of all others in the organization.
8. **Give feedback.** Constructive feedback helps to enhance performance and productivity. People like to know how they are contributing to achieving the organization's goals.
9. **Incorporate and recognize diversity:** Respect each individual's values and backgrounds and promote an anti-racist work environment through continuous awareness and recognition for diversity.
10. **Embrace continuous improvement.** To support change, organizations need to employ a process of continuous improvement. Evaluation, effective communication and employing methods to self-correct are ways to foster continuous improvement.