

## 6 Commandments for D&I Leadership Success

One of the tragedies of the diversity and inclusion field is how quickly D&I professionals burn out, often right when their efforts are about to pay off. D&I work is challenging and can often be lonely. Set yourself and your team up for success by following these six commandments of D&I leadership success:

**Start with yourself: Commit to self-care.** Prepare to run a marathon, not a 400-meter dash. Ensure you have social support outside of work. Commit to spending quality time with loved ones, experiencing joy and inspiration, doing healthy activities and taking vacations. Find allies inside and outside your organization. Create community – you will need a community to hold you up and fill you up. Find trusted mentors and peers, especially those who have done this longer than you, including in other industries. Build relationships with people you trust, that you can be fully honest with, talk through challenges with and run ideas by.

**Assess the degree and nature of your commitment and stamina.** What are your personal values and motivations to do this work? What is your story? Are you ready, able and willing to run a marathon (five to 10-plus year commitment) if necessary? How long and how far are you willing to go? Are you the right person to do what the work requires in your organization and industry? If not, who is? What are your boundaries, and how will you know when they've been crossed? How many hours per week are you willing to work? How will you know when it's time to give up or pass the torch?

**Determine the motivation and readiness of your organization to “do” D&I.** Is your organization poised to benefit from your commitment and stamina? What are its pain points in general? What does it want more of and less of outside of D&I? What keeps the organization's leaders up at night? [Use these seven questions](#) to assess your organization's readiness.

**Make the case for D&I consistently and clearly.** How is doing D&I going to get your organization and its leadership more of what you want and less of what you don't? Engaging both hemispheres of the brain by using data *and* stories makes for a stronger case that resonates with a wider group of people. Quickly, effectively and frequently demonstrate diversity return on investment using both of the following:

- **Numbers that matter.** How is the absence of D&I hurting recruitment and retention? Productivity or employee sick days? Lawsuits, complaints? Lost business or service opportunities, or market share? Try using the [Hubbard Diversity Contribution Model](#) to identify an actual dollar amount being lost per year due to *not* doing D&I. Also show potential gains in revenue or savings by doing D&I.
- **Stories that resonate.** Identify anecdotes and real case studies showing how D&I caused success people care about, or how lack of D&I created pain people care about. Or, show a clear disconnect between your organization's values and what is actually occurring. Be sure to include stories from *your organization*, as well as your wider industry, perhaps to demonstrate potential risks or what competitors are doing better than you.

**Focus the majority of your time on the neutral or uncertain majority, not on the minority of active resisters.** When change or innovation happens, about 16 percent of people get enthusiastically on board right away, 16 percent actively resist the change no matter what and 68 percent will wait and see. Focus on the [68 percent](#) (scroll down to “The Bell Curve of Leader Buy-in” for an excellent illustration).

**Pace yourself and be savvy in your timing.** Remember you are running a marathon – set *realistic* goals and timelines. Stick to these, but adjust appropriately (don't cave entirely!) given shifting organizational priorities and unexpected developments. Be willing to give up your, and your leadership's, personal preferences for pace and timing in the interest of what will provide maximum impact for your organization and maximal positive response from key stakeholders.

**Let's talk about how to set you up for success!** [susana@susanarinderle.com](mailto:susana@susanarinderle.com)