



The People Management

Shaping Young HR Leaders



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Doing Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) work can be one of the most rewarding things you ever do in your career. But it can also be one of the most challenging, emotionally charged experiences you'll ever have in your career—especially if you're struggling to meet the needs of underserved communities and sometimes feeling like, no matter how hard you try, you just can't move the needle toward equity.

1. Answer the Call

Many professionals in the Diversity and Inclusion space did not intend to go into this work, but they felt it calling them in some way, so the first step to being successful and effective in D&I is to answer its call. That doesn't necessarily mean having an official D&I position at first. You may not have an official D&I role, but if you're passionate about it, then you are best suited to lead the path for the organization.

2. Being Willing to Collaborate

People get into D&I because they're enthusiastic and have an overflow of ideas on how to make a company's Diversity Recruitment plan the most successful it can be, as well as how to create a truly inclusive environment for members of different underrepresented groups. However, despite

this, one cannot ignore the importance of collaboration and hearing multiple voices when making decisions.

One needs allies & one has to be an ally too. Also, the communities that one is serving must be part of the conversation. This ensures that you're not missing out on anything critical.

3. Understand All Communities Have Different Experiences

One of the reasons why embracing collaboration is so important is because even people who are members of a minority group can only speak to their own experience. One of my ex-colleague, Sharon who led D&I for the company was a multicultural Black woman. She realized that she needed the input of other minority groups in the company in order to effectively meet their needs.

4. Be Prepared for Diversity Fatigue

No matter how passionate you are about D&I, Diversity Fatigue is something you can expect to experience from time to time—and that's okay. The trick is to know how to handle it effectively so you can recharge and move forward.

5. Set Personal Boundaries

When you work in D&I, you may find that your friends and family consider you an expert on various related issues—and they may take liberties in asking you questions during your free time. My ex-colleague Sharon shared that part of her regimen to deal with diversity fatigue was to set clear boundaries about what she will and will not talk about.

Although addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion can be frustrating and tiring, Sharon says that the occasional feelings of fatigue are actually a positive thing because they're telling you something—that you're exactly where you're supposed to be.

"If you're feeling depleted, I honestly do believe that's a sign that you're in the right job, because if you're not somehow emotionally drained from this work, how are you invested?" said Sharon. "I think it does take a level of empathy to be able to do this type of work."



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