



Diversity is a strategic choice. Choosing well makes you competitive.

Diversity. It means we don't all look like each other, think like each other, or act like each other. A diverse workplace is a competitive workplace, a winning workplace.

What does that mean? It means diversity is strategic. But we have a lot of work to do.

In 2020 we heard a lot about systemic racism. America saw the tragic effects of systemic racism. There was a lot to read: what it means to be racist, white privilege, white fragility. We hoped we could be allies.

There was backlash. Politicians and others tried to turn back the clock to the not-so-happy days when we lived in a bubble of delusion about the realities of American life.

So. It's 2021. Time for a change. Time to pay attention.

The future is in sight. And it's diverse.

Your clients get that. Do you?

I've worked with dozens of companies in the past 35 years. Small, large, for-profit, non-profit. North, east, south, and west. And one thing sets great companies apart from ordinary "meh" companies. They pay attention to the right things. Diversity is a choice, not an accident.

Right now, your clients are paying attention to diversity and inclusion. You should, too.

Why? Because if it's important to them, it's important to us. Many of us who manage proposals work with federal opportunities. Here's what the Office of Personnel Management has to say about diversity and inclusion:

We strongly believe that a diverse workforce in an inclusive environment will improve individual and organizational performance and result in better value to customers, clients, taxpayers, and other stakeholders.

From OPM's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. [Available here.](#)

Seriously. Think about this. What if your company were to say to you, "I'd like you to ignore the qualifications and skills of applicants, and only select individuals who will look the most like you - color, gender, education, ancestry, and age."

Your response would likely be "You're out of your mind!" And yet because we don't pay attention to unconscious bias, that is often exactly what happens. Lack of differentiation can stifle creativity - if everyone has the same perspective, where would innovation come from?

Is your company going to be part of the future?

[My job is to help clients see the future of their companies and pursue it.](#) Diversity is an important part of that vision. *Diversity is strategic.* Gaining an advantage in your market means differentiating your company from its competitors. But, if your people all look the same, how will you even understand meaningful differences? There's a reason we try to avoid groupthink. That reason is it limits innovation, creativity, and problem-solving - essential skills that make up compelling and winning solutions.

The Millennials are Coming.

A [2019 post on the World Economic Forum website](#) reports that by 2025, individuals born between 1981 and 1996 will make up 75% of the global workforce. Of interest, the 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey says 74% of that generation believes their organization is more innovative when it has a culture of inclusion. The message: in about four years, your best employees will expect a diverse and inclusive work environment. Time to get ready.

It's a Strategy.

Diversity is strategic. A strategy is a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major aim or goal. Without a strategy of diversity and inclusion, you could find yourself seeing the end of your company's future, not a bright horizon.

But first this.

Promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace is just the right thing to do. Making it possible for everyone to contribute his/her/their best puts oxygen in the room. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it's also the smart thing to do. Working together reduces friction, barriers, and wasted

time. Open communication and collaboration impro productivity and leads to smart, competitive, proposals. Hmm. That sounds like a strategy.

Be together. Not the same.

That 2014 Android tagline pretty much sums up the message of inclusion and diversity.

Try it - you have nothing to lose. And really, everything to gain.