

5 Facets of Response

Before using this action-based take-away handout, please remember that it is impossible to do this work alone. Trained professionals from inside your organization or industry, those outside of your realm of influence, and external thought leaders will be the key to answering many questions well. Do not attempt to do this quickly or alone.

Trained professionals like consultants can help you and your organization investigate the best and the worst practices. Individual and organizational development and coaching are done successfully with the support of trained professional coaches. Experienced facilitators conduct meaningful training for your stakeholders. Professional mediators may need to work through touch communications and build collaborative and trusting partnerships. Mentors, mastermind groups, and other professional support groups can teach you as much as you can teach them. This is a cooperative, sharing, vulnerable support habit that must be built one piece at a time and then constantly reevaluated, changed, and updated.

- 1 Investigate the concern and relevant situation.**
- 2 Coach those involved to lead.**
- 3 Train and educate others to respond again in the future.**
- 4 Collaborate on suggestions for how to respond.**
- 5 Support yourself, your organization, your industry, and beyond.**



Investigate

- 0 Review employee assessment procedures and design reporting systems to understand DEI realities in your organization.
- 1 Utilize findings from listening sessions and analysis data to strategize and prioritize next steps with the DEI team and organizational leadership. Ideally, these findings would include participants from across the value chain of your product or service and across industry partners, including community stakeholders who come in at the ground level, work through the offering's life and disposal, then head back to the ground floor.
- 2 Do stakeholders know what success is? Do they even frame things as success? Work with stakeholders to determine their desired success stories. These stakeholders need to be insiders and outsiders as well as both loyal and critical customers who post snarky comments online.
- 3 Develop a comprehensive communication plan that reaches all stakeholders with progress updates, complete with missteps, mistakes, and dumpster fires, new learnings or ideas, progress made, and failures. The goal is to model and communicate your process, outcomes, and vision to appropriate parties at a persistent and consistent pace.
- 4 Develop a plan for ongoing data collection, report-out systems, and ongoing assessment that's minimally disruptive to daily workflow.
- 5 How are you actively gathering data? Once you receive feedback, how is it communicated? Evaluated? Responded to? Is the data taken seriously? Responding is a lot easier when you know what you're replicating instead of just wanting to be liked or successful.



Coach

- 0 Formalize new structures with your leadership team and ensure understanding for the whole organization. Pilot utilization of a DEI assessment in the overall organizational mission, vision, and strategy review. The Intercultural Development Inventory®, or IDI, is a well-respected tool that assesses where individuals score themselves along a bell curve distribution of skills developed when confronted with difference. The results are reviewed individually and kept entirely confidential. Then a group review is offered so that a larger conversation can take place without any one person feeling obligated to catch up or establishing someone else as more advanced than the others.
- 1 Foster commitment to change throughout the organization through reflective coaching. Follow through on what's requested, and encourage what stakeholders, supporters, and naysayers may identify as opportunities and growth areas.
- 2 Organize and plan changes with your leadership team and stakeholders to serve as listening guides. The goal is to equip others to act effectively and build systems for change, inspiring others to do the same, if not better, indefinitely.
- 3 Communication matters in terms of both what's being communicated and who's doing the communicating. Guiding stakeholders to communicate about your organization's DEI initiative will generate buy-in and critique, also known as engagement.
- 4 Lean on stakeholders to establish ongoing internal coaches who have clear and explicit roles and timelines. Pilot new reporting systems to handle complaints and questions and be proactive in planning future initiatives. Document logic, intention, and goals for best continuity and succession planning.
- 5 Implement executive consultation throughout change initiatives so that all key stakeholders, organizational leaders, chosen live wires, and sacred exceptions understand their roles in the initiative and its most current progress status.



Train

- 0 Review existing policies and reporting systems through a Q&A with leadership, stakeholders, and delegated DEI team members charged with the responsibility of enforcing internal expectations. Often employees haven't been trained in current practices, or if they have its inconsistent Assuming everyone was on-boarded at all (let alone consistently) is an error.
- 1 Using internal and external resources, develop the skill to shift your stakeholders' perspectives about DEI to include personal responsibility, self-reflection, active listening, and building better connections rather than just mediated or facilitated conversations.
- 2 Define roles and responsibilities (new and old) with purpose-driven clarity, a timeline, accountability, and internal support. Transparently share, mimic, cheer, and showcase these internal structures for others.
- 3 Design an ongoing plan to control consistent messaging about your organization's vision, and recruit internal trainers, participants, and content creators. The IDI, for example, requires individuals to attend an overview training before they can participate in an assessment. All stakeholders must attend a group review session, followed by optional one-on-one sessions to understand each person's strengths and where they can grow. Once an understanding is reached, they can then support the larger group's initiatives in an Individual Development Plan.
- 4 Hold on-the-ground training sessions with teams and individuals in specific areas of DEI to improve, develop, and deepen their commitment to the organization's culture.
- 5 Schedule and benchmark regular team trainings and refreshers. Consider implementing ongoing resources, such as webinars, retreats, book clubs, and team and board development sessions, to keep conversations stirring. More importantly, in these training contexts, listen for new issues, trends, or comment patterns.



Collaborate

- 0 Collect documentation for DEI procedures (including by laws and organizational policies) you can review and refine to match your organization's culture design. Develop a campaign to communicate DEI-related processes, rationales, and outcomes to all stakeholders.
- 1 Identify champions of DEI work through networking and by analyzing the power dynamics within your organization. Include actual organizational charts, and document the actual flow of information and how your organizational communication processes really work.
- 2 Establish DEI partnerships, both within your industry and outside of it, that can serve as advisory councils for accountability, ideas, critical feedback, and encouragement.
- 3 Share with, listen to, and learn from others how you and your organization could support others. Can you collectively mastermind with one another through the preparation, recognition, and response aspects of the work each person is attempting to undertake? Sharing, listening, and learning are critical aspects of building support.
- 4 Mobilize similar preparation, recognition, and response teams across your industry and in your surrounding community. These teams should meet regularly, conduct intentional listening sessions, and systematically assess each aspect of the initiative so that it can audition its way into staying.
- 5 Normalize the initiative into the regular vernacular of the organization so that it's institutionalized and organically referenced in other organizations' initiatives industry wide.



Support

- 0 Review bylaws, policies, and reporting systems. Discuss, write, and implement revisions that will align with actual practice.
- 1 Your stakeholders are an active presence during the diagnosis to quell anxiety, build momentum, and monitor and adjust the process for lasting change. There may, however, be a need for impartial third parties to hear concerns from all people in the organization. These third parties could come from internal cross-training initiatives, parallel group members across your industry, different industries in your community, or external consultants, coaches, and trainers. Having support from third parties allows you to see your organization's capabilities and where you're going to need additional talent, resources, time, or funding to maintain whatever it is you envision.
- 2 Actively acknowledge and seek out ways to be generous with others and accept the gift of the unknown. Some organizations will use a practice of generosity to promote safe spaces, bias response protocols, and the like.
- 3 When designing and pushing out marketing packages for stakeholders, give equal focus to pulling in additional perspectives as well as your own. How will you intentionally solicit feedback about your process up to this point? Going forward? What kind of progress accountability can you put in place? Can you institutionalize reviews and recalls and adjust as needed?
- 4 The new normal of your organization's work is to model the way for others to ask themselves tough questions. Include a purposeful design flaw that trips a response before something really big happens, such as a "See something, say something" campaign that's taken seriously at the lowest levels before escalating. I learned in an anti-defamation league training that acts of bias (think gossip or flyers getting torn down) need to be interrupted before prejudice becomes active discrimination or leads to violence. A purposeful design flaw allows you to object to experiences that don't align with your organization's foundational culture. Full stop.
- 5 Monitor change processes, coach and consult with leadership, and lead with curiosity where adjustments need to happen for all stakeholders, among the surrounding community, and across your industry.

