



# All A-Board! Prioritizing Board Diversity & Inclusion

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# Getting to Know You!

Let's go around the Zoom room and introduce ourselves!

Please share with us your:

- Name,
- Title
- Institution/university
- One reason you've joined this session today

Now, think of the board(s) on which you serve as you answer these questions in the Zoom poll.



# Introduction & Background

REAL Talk premise is participatory – originally designed as a 15-minute talk

2000-2020: Learning Network Coordinator, County Extension Director, statewide specialist – who has returned to my local nonprofit organization as the board president

Look forward to facilitating this discussion on board diversity and inclusion. I have had more success with diversity and inclusion at a board level (as a board member and now president leading the charge) than as an educator or statewide specialist influencing others to make change. I will be interested in hearing about your successes/failures during today's talk.



# What Brings You Joy?

Take 3 minutes and go find an object nearby (wherever you are) that brings you joy *related to diversity and inclusion*

When you come back, hide the item until it's your turn to share

Julian Agyeman, mentioned the idea of “contact theory” in his keynote address. How has contact with “different others” motivated you in your work as a community development educator/specialist?



# All Talk – No Action!

Take a guess! According to a national study conducted by board source, what percentage of nonprofit board members are white?

84 percent of board members are white, 90 percent of board chairs are white, and at least a quarter of boards were all white.

The study, *Leading with Intent*, that Board Source conducts annually showed that boards were only 2% more diverse in 2017 than they were 23 years ago (in 1994).<sup>1</sup> We've done a whole lot of talking since then but produced very little action.

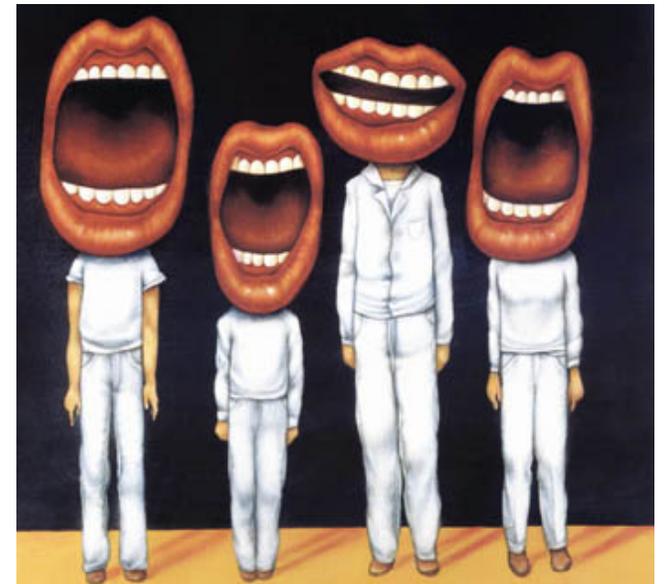




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DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF BOARDS AND EXECUTIVES<sup>6</sup>

| Race & Ethnicity                    | Chief Executive | Board Chair | Board Member |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Caucasian                           | 90%             | 90%         | 84%          |
| African American/Black              | 4%              | 5%          | 8%           |
| Asian                               | 2%              | 2%          | 3%           |
| American Indian or Alaska Native    | < 1%            | 1%          | 1%           |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | < 1%            | < 1%        | < 1%         |
| Two or more races                   | 2%              | 1%          | 1%           |
| Other                               | 2%              | 1%          | 3%           |
| Hispanic or Latino of any race      | 3%              | 3%          | 5%           |
| Not Hispanic or Latino              | 97%             | 97%         | 95%          |

| Gender | Chief Executive | Board Chair | Board Member |
|--------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| Male   | 28%             | 58%         | 52%          |
| Female | 72%             | 42%         | 48%          |
| Other  | 0%              | < 1%        | < 1%         |

| Age         | Chief Executive | Board Chair | Board Member |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------|--------------|
| 65 or older | 13%             | 29%         | 16%          |
| 50 to 64    | 56%             | 43%         | 41%          |
| 40 to 49    | 20%             | 17%         | 26%          |
| Under 40    | 11%             | 11%         | 17%          |



# Good Intentions

The truth is that most of us have the best of intentions. We are genuinely open to others, who hold dissimilar backgrounds or beliefs, coming on board and working alongside us toward a mission of joint interest and concern. But, boards often stop at stating their “openness” to diversity feeling like that is “enough” to satisfy the required discussion. Or worse, their implicit bias stands in their way of being welcoming in the first place.

Share about a time when this happened on a board you were a part of.

What was said?

How did you react?

What was the ultimate outcome?



# Meaningful Actions

Many times board members are not so “happy” when they have to change their board schedules or practices to accommodate the cultural differences that inherently come with an intentional move toward inclusion.

It is important to take meaningful actions to change a board’s diversity profile. Here are some ideas:

- 1) Succession planning with diversity in mind
- 2) Intentionally recruiting new members
- 3) Adjusting meeting times so employees in all lines of work can attend
- 4) Rethinking what meaningful social interaction looks like by generation

Other ideas for “meaningful actions” that can result in change?



# Case Study

I received this message from a colleague recently:

*“I’ve been trying for the past couple months to find a Hispanic representative for our nonprofit board. I wondered if you had any contacts. The bad thing is that nominations are due in two weeks, so whoever we get would have to be able to respond pretty quickly. Any help you can provide would be greatly appreciated!”*

What issues do you see with my colleague’s inquiry?



# Issues Explored

Obviously, there are lots of issues with this situation:

- 1) Has anyone from the board attempted to reach out to the Hispanic community in any meaningful way previous to this request?
- 2) If so, how has the board membership opportunity been communicated to them?
- 3) Beyond race and ethnicity, what expertise are they looking for this representative to bring to the board?
- 4) How would the “Hispanic representative,” or his/her community, benefit from joining the board?



# It's More Than Just Checking a Box

It is possible there are legitimate answers to some of these questions, but overall the problem seems to boil down to “checking a box.”

Author Amy Neumann, writing for *Thrive Global* ([https://thriveglobal.com/stories/lived-experience-creates-more-effective-boards-of-directors/#disqus\\_thread](https://thriveglobal.com/stories/lived-experience-creates-more-effective-boards-of-directors/#disqus_thread)), says “the overall effect of checking a box can still be homogenous. Therefore, diversity needs to include many different types of “lived experience” ...age, physical ability, gender expression, socio-economic status, education, religion, political leaning, or body type.”



# Rejecting Tokenism, Embracing Lived Experience

What does “lived experience” mean to you?

Does it feel more “authentic?” Why or why not?”

Share about a time when someone’s “lived experience” helped bring insight to a discussion, solve a problem, or realize a profit/gain for an organization you worked for/with...

How have you tried to bring “lived experience” to the board(s) you serve?



# The Diversity Wheel

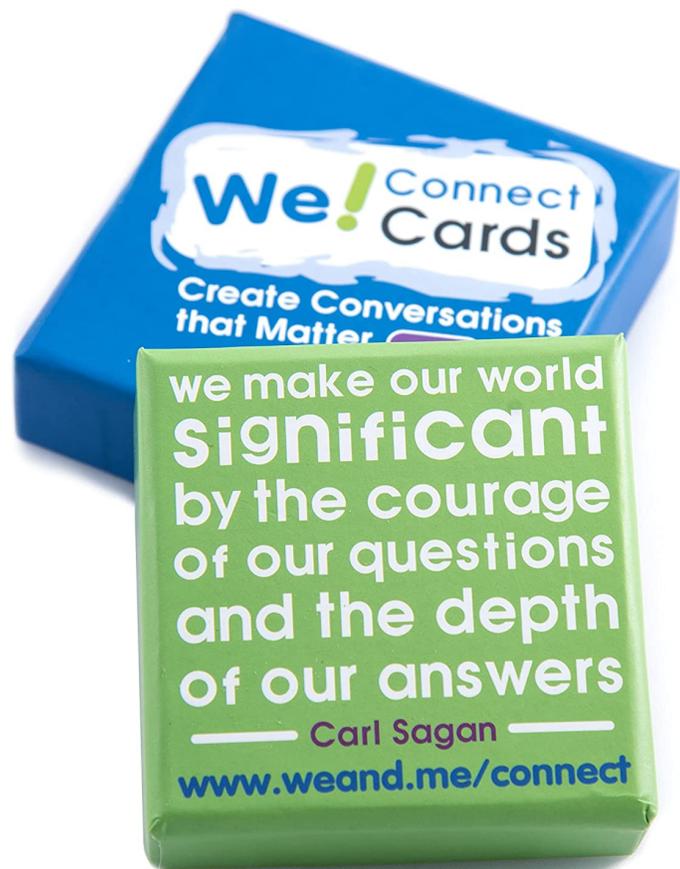


Diverse organizations:

- Have 19% higher revenue ([Boston Consulting Group](#))
- Are 1.7 times more likely to be innovation leaders in their market ([Josh Bersin](#))
- Are 70% more likely to capture a new market ([Harvard Business Review](#)).



# Sharing Our Lived Experiences...



## Question 1:

What is one of your favorite places in the world?

## Question 2:

What is an idea you strongly believe in?

## Question 3:

What is something you do differently than most people?



# What is “Parity”?

What does it mean to reach community parity?

- parity
  - noun (1)
  - par·i·ty | \ 'per-ə-tē , 'pa-rə- \
  - *plural* **parities**
  - **Definition of *parity* (Entry 1 of 2)**
  - **1:** the quality or state of being equal or equivalent
- “Women have fought for *parity* with men in the workplace.”



# Case Study: Learning Network

“If your organization doesn’t look like the community you serve, are you legitimate? How can you be effective?”~ Julian Agyeman

My board’s path to parity has been long (2017-2020) with two steps forward, one step back for three years, but we have finally reached a “starting point.”



2017 Board  
Representation:  
8 white males  
3 white females

2020 Board  
Representation:  
2 white males  
3 white females  
1 Hispanic male  
5 Hispanic females



# Prioritizing Board Diversity – Reaching Parity

**Build it in.** Establish a plan and make it one of your board's SMART goals that shows up as part of an "action plan" that is part of every meeting's agenda. Make this a regular discussion item and assign a committee to it.

**Each one reach one.** Succession planning with diversity in mind is every board member's responsibility. Who in your circle of influence have you told about the value of your organization's destination? Who can you mentor for board leadership who would otherwise feel unprepared to do so?

**Look beyond the "same old."** Encourage board members to be creative instead of taking the easy route and nominating someone they know or who is already active on other boards.



# Above and Beyond: Strategy 1

**Reach out** to members of your community who are also recipients of your nonprofit organization's programming.

**Key informant interviews.** Ask them a few questions regarding their reflections/thoughts for improvement.

**Convene an advisory board** made up entirely of recipients of your organization's programming to continually advise its operations.

This **intentional relationship-building** exercise will bear fruit in time by leading to informed board member succession and advocacy.



# Above and Beyond: Strategy 2

Become involved in your community's **Diversity Round Table**, attending meetings monthly to find out what issues are relevant to your local area and the people who live there.

If a Diversity Round Table does not exist, **consider creating one** (a more time-consuming but valuable endeavor) as an outgrowth of your nonprofit organization's desire to connect to—and stay in touch with—the community base.



# Above and Beyond: Strategy 3

Design a **“Workforce Development Hub”** in your local community

Before implementation, be sure to **seek the input of all levels** of the socio-economic strata in your community, including diverse perspectives.

**Align the work of this hub—and its partnerships—to the mission** of your organization. Then, watch your board diversity grow as alumni of the “hub” create a natural path for board succession.



# Call To Action

As a Boilermaker, I frequently hear the whistle blowing in the background. When it comes to board development, I always imagine the conductor calling out “All Aboard!” Think of the board on which you serve.

- 1) Who have you told about the value of your organization’s destination?
- 2) Are they ready for you to extend a hand and pull them onto the platform?

If no one comes to mind, it’s not too late! Go out there and make it happen! It takes every member of a board to throw some coal on the fire. Don’t let the diversity train pass you by!



# To Be Continued...

Please share one of your “ah-ha” moments from today’s discussion?

What ideas/strategies do you hope to take back to your diversity and inclusion work?

If you would like to continue this conversation, I will be hosting a NACDEP Webinar on Wednesday, Aug. 12 @ 3 p.m.