



Coaching and Consulting for Excellence and Equity

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Creating a Change Team

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Moving an organization into deeper alignment with its mission, with a focus on equity, is a significant undertaking. While a theoretical commitment to justice and belonging may already exist in the institution, as your organization's Board, staff and other constituencies become more representative of the broader US population generally, you may be faced with a number of polarizing elements. These may include: people who hold a sense of urgency about moving toward equity; those who are committed to tradition and want to make sure not to alienate populations who have historically been critical to and centered in the organization; those who feel that talking about change is inherently divisive; those who believe in the equity endeavors, but are unsure how to engage the process; those with both the experience and expertise to support the work, but without the power to do so.

Creating a Change Team can help your organization move forward in advancing its DEI objectives. When creating a change team, it's important to consider the range of perspectives in your institution and to convene a group that is sensitive to this multitude of voices.

Here are some promising practices based on our experience developing organizations:

1) The change team should be convened by the lead executive--the director, CEO, Head of School, etc. This assures that:

- the work of the change team remains an organizational priority
- power is at the table for critical conversations and decisions.

2) The selection process should be open and transparent. A letter of invitation to all employees should outline:

- the selection process and priorities, the role, limitations and purpose of the change;
- the relationship of the change team to the organizational structure;
- the process timeline;
- an invitation to respond with a submission (email, voice recording, video, etc.) that should include the community member's interest, experience and expertise on the topic at hand as well as how



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they feel their participation will contribute to the institutional goals. It is important to uplift that the priority is to construct a diverse team that will reflect the organization's vision for equity.

3) Once all submissions of interest have been collected, the team should be crafted by the organizational leader, and equity consultant and one or two others with experience in equity work. With diversity as a chief aim, considerations should include:

- race;
- other identities--ethnicity, religion, class, ability, age, sex, gender (identity and expression) and sexual orientation;
- rank;
- longevity;
- experience and expertise.

When thinking about identity balance within the team, there are two chief considerations:

- Based on the focus of equity work, that group should be healthily represented to support a variety of voices from within that community (e.g., if the focus is on gender equity, women, femme, female identified individuals should be represented in the full breadth of their diversity).
- As racism/white supremacy is a foundational ill in the United States, it is especially important to attend to racial diversity within the Change Team.

A note about the number of total participants: While the size of the change team will differ depending on the total number of employees in the organization, for group process and agility, change teams should not exceed 15 people.

4) Share who has been selected with the organization and make sure that there is a central way to communicate with each and all on the change team (e.g., changeteam@... or a Teams Channel of their own).

While these recommendations are relatively simple, there are a number of considerations and complications that may arise during implementation. Please let us know how we can bring our expertise to bear to help you achieve enduring change toward equity including the first essential tasks of a change team, and how to leverage the work of the team to have impact organization-wide.