Deena McKay

# Let’s Get Real: Meeting the Challenge of Creating & Keeping Diverse Work Environments

# Introduction - Deena McKay

- Been in tech for 10+ years
- Based in Chicago, IL
- 1st time at Agile Alliance!
- Current
  - Senior Scrum Master at the Kraft Heinz Company
  - Podcast, Black Tech Unplugged
  - DEI Consultant

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# Why Are You Here?

- Define and understand what diversity and inclusion at a team level truly means
- Learn how to ensure your team members feel welcome and included
- Increase your courage to take inclusive action in the workplace

# Do you think you have a diverse team?

**According to a Glassdoor survey, more than 50% of current employees want their workplace to do more to increase diversity**

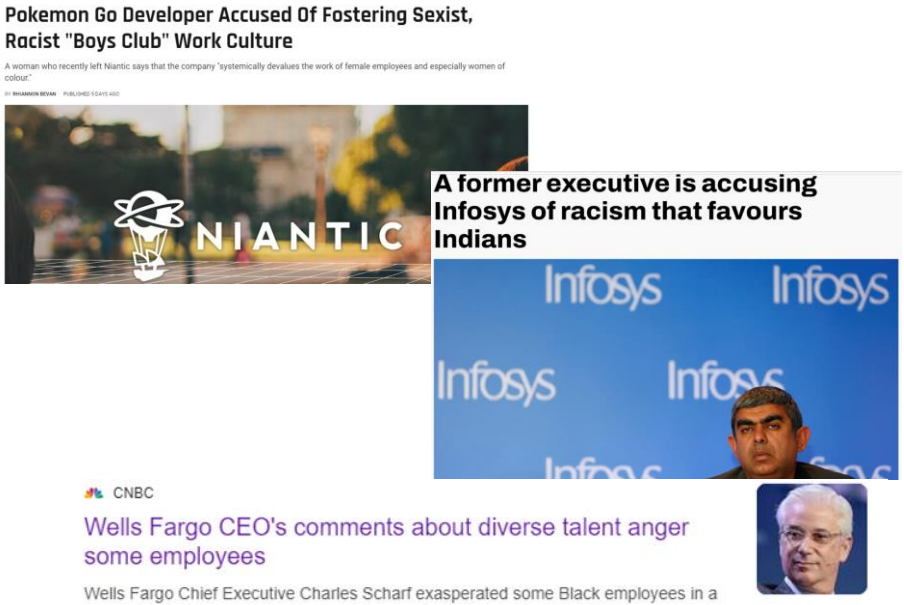
# What is a Diverse Team

A diverse team is when individuals with different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and problem-solving approaches come together.

This diversity of thought fosters creativity and leads to innovative solutions. Diverse teams are more likely to generate fresh ideas and develop unique approaches to challenges.

# Why are teams not diverse by default

- Systemic issues (ex. Access to elite education, awareness of career paths)
- Individual bias engrained at many levels
- Don’t know where to even start

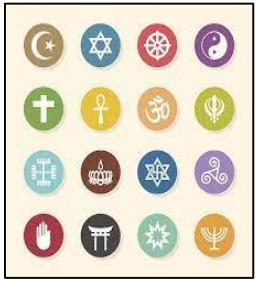


# What Makes a Team Diverse?

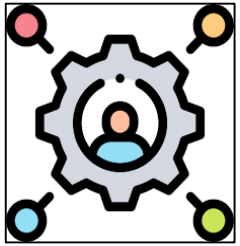
Age

Nationality

Ethnicity



Religious Background



Skills/Ability

Personal History /
Professional Background

Gender

# Benefits of Diverse Teams

- Boost to creativity and innovation
- Develop a smarter approach to problems
- Improves profits & higher employer equity
- Increases employee engagement

# Challenges of Having a Diverse Team

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Communication barriers | | Identify language and communication |
| Cultural differences | | Establish working boundaries |
| Slower decision-making | | Implement deadlines |
| Team bias | | Analyze potential bias |

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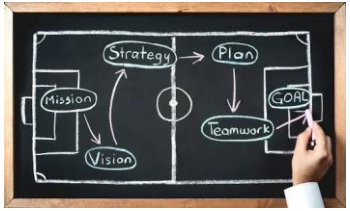
# How can you ensure diversity on your teams




Customize your vision & company

Redefine your recruiting strategy

Practice empathetic leadership

Listen to your employees

Identify & eliminate any bias

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**Companies in the top quartile for being ethnically and culturally diverse are 36% more profitable than those in the bottom quartile**

McKinsey

**A strong sense of belonging (or inclusion) among employees was found to result in a 50% lower risk of turnover and 56% increase in job performance**

Harvard Business Review (HBR)

# What is inclusion?

The fact of including all types of people, things, or ideas and treating them all fairly and equally.

Inclusive teams embrace and celebrate the diverse characteristics of their members and treat everyone fairly and equally.

# When Employees Don’t Feel Included

- Don’t show up for fellow colleagues
- Pushed into isolation
- Bad attitude / lashing out
- Likely to quit

# Why is inclusion important?

- 2x as likely to meet or exceed financial targets
- 3x as likely to be high-performing
- 6x more likely to be innovative and agile
- 8x more likely to achieve better business outcomes

# What’s Helpful vs What’s Not

Compassionate Listening

Empathy

Curiosity

Shutting Down

Defensiveness

Assumptions

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# How to Make Others Feel Included?

Make better connections

Establish psychological safety

Be honest & encourage honesty

Discourage group think

# How to Make Others Feel Included?

Encourage
Vulnerability

Celebrate
cultural differences

Create a
safe space

# Scenarios

# Scenario #1

You notice a certain team mate LiLiu hardly ever contributes in team meetings, but when you speak to them 1:1 they share valuable reflections and great suggestions. At the next team meeting you notice they remain silent again, what do you do?

# Scenario #2

You are part of a team tasked with convening an expert group of external stakeholders. As you review the final list of experts you realise that they are a rather homogenous group of individuals: mostly white men. You are concerned that this is not representative of the community you serve. You recognise the importance of having diverse voices, but the selection process is close to being finalised. What do you do?

# Scenario #3

You join your direct report, Colin, a senior architect, in a second round virtual interview for an experienced architecture position. The candidate is a Black woman, Natalie, who appears to be in her mid 30s. The interview goes well, however, in the post interview debrief your direct report consistently but subtly raises concerns about culture fit. How do you respond?

# Scenario #4

A group of senior leaders gather to assess challenge around progressing and STEM subjects for example, there is nothing we can do.” recruiting stuff from diverse backgrounds, and one says, “The real issue is that there is no pipeline of underrepresented talent for us to source from. Until that is fixed in society, through getting more people studying

# Model for Inclusive Mindfulness

- ❑ Slow Down. Be mindful & considered in your responses to others
- ❑ Perspective Taking. Actively imagine the thoughts & feelings of others
- ❑ Assumptions. Actively self-question to challenge your assumptions
- ❑ Cultural Intelligence. Making culturally appropriate attributions
- ❑ Expand. Actively nurture diverse networks & form friendships with people from backgrounds different to your own

# Session Recap

- Defined Diversity and Inclusion
- Discussed the importance of having a diverse, inclusive team
- How to keep your diverse team
- Reviewed scenarios and how you can use your voice to ensure inclusion and belonging occurs within your team

# Questions?

# Let’s Stay Connected!

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