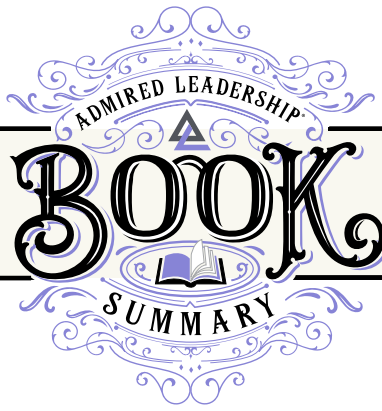**BOOK SUMMARY**
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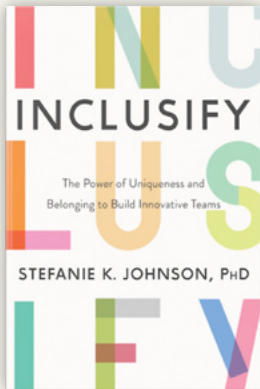
Eight Minutes, Not Eight Hours

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Inclusify

The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging to Build Innovative Teams

Published 2020   BOOK AUTHOR: **STEFANIE K. JOHNSON, PH.D.**

In *Inclusify,* Dr. Stefanie Johnson outlines how leaders from middle management to the C-suite can transform their leadership style to build a workplace that is diverse and inclusive. Johnson developed the *"Inclusify"* approach to leadership by identifying what the best leaders have in common.

They value uniqueness while creating an environment where employees feel they belong. Through a series of experiments, field studies, and interviews, Johnson established that the environments fostered by *Inclusifyers* drive innovation, reduce turnover, increase sales, and improve employee morale. Johnson describes six leadership archetypes and explains what steps each archetype can take to become *Inclusifyers* by tailoring their approach to meet individuals' most basic needs.

Key Quote

"Inclusify: To live and lead in a way that recognizes and celebrates unique and dissenting perspectives while creating a collaborative and open-minded environment where everyone feels they truly belong."
- Stefanie K. Johnson

Key Concepts

The Power of Uniqueness and Belonging. Good leaders create an inclusive workplace "by welcoming people to fit in while supporting them in their desire to stand out" (p. 7).

The ABCs of Breaking Bias. Breaking the cycle of unconscious bias means admitting you have it, blocking your tendency to do it (such as by making assessments anonymous), and setting goals for diversity.

Three Lessons to Put You on the Path to Inclusifying. "First, the playing field is not level; people have to travel different distances to get to the same place. Second, entrenched systems can inhibit your diversity and inclusion efforts. And third, we are living in a post #MeToo world" (p. 33).

Meritocracy Manager. Be careful of being a manager who appeals to "meritocracy," which is a word that makes people immediately think of white men (p. 52). Instead, to avoid missing the right candidate, define your criteria before you begin evaluating candidates. Being fair by "anonymizing assessments" and using "aggressive transparency" are the first steps to take to becoming an Inclusifyer (p. 62).

Culture Crusader. Instead of focusing on building a homogenous culture, "Inclusifyers take it upon themselves to update their cultural communication skills," just as they'd update their computer or their code (p. 83). Develop a new culture by Inclusifying "your cultural values and behaviors, going for rogues, and crafting culture crews" (p. 87).

Team Player. In fitting into a company's culture, make sure you don't lose sight of your own and others' unique identities and cultures. Try to focus on the unique contributions of gender and racial minorities, empathize with them, and encourage debate and dissension.

White Knight. However well-meaning, there are costs to putting gender or racial minorities on a pedestal. It sends the message that they "are incompetent while also alienating [others] in the organization" (p. 131). To "really Inclusify, you are best served by ensuring that everyone is aligned" as a team (p. 143). Make sure each one has an equal say and keep expectations high for everyone.

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Shepherd. In supporting your team, Inclusifyers learn to "walk a fine line between championing others like themselves without appearing to give them special treatment" (p. 154). Shepherds should learn to do the following: "Think right and left – not right and wrong" and "Prepare for perception" (pp. 159, 162).

Optimist. Creating change takes action as well as intention. Make public your convictions about Inclusifying and celebrate these ideas openly. Then take action and "increase goals and accountability" to reach your diversity targets (p. 197).

My Inclusify Journey. "Whether you're an Optimist, a Shepherd, or a little bit of everything including Inclusifyer, the lessons of this book are designed to help you enhance the uniqueness and belonging in your organizations" (p. 214).

THE INCLUSIFYER

The portmanteau "Inclusify" - a combination of diversity and include - means "to live and lead in a way that recognizes and celebrates unique and dissenting perspectives while creating a collaborative and open-minded environment where everyone feels they truly belong" (p. xiii).

The Inclusifyer is a leader who embraces different perspectives and backgrounds and fits all the unique pieces together to create a cohesive, interdependent team with a shared purpose (p. xiii). Inclusifyers are tasked with balancing people's need to belong while being their authentic selves (pp. 1-2).

Two Most Basic Human Needs: To Belong and To Be Unique

Belonging is the feeling that everyone knows your name, and that you fit in with the group (p. 4).

Uniqueness is feeling that your individual talents are valued, a need that is particularly salient among Millennials and Gen Zers who have grown up being told to "be yourself" (p. 7).

When the balance of belonging and uniqueness are not met, employees may feel incomplete (they feel like they can fit in, but not as their true self), invisible (they do not feel like they fit in, and they feel like no one knows them), or insular (they do not feel like they fit in, but people know the real them) (p. 14).

Why Become an Inclusifyer?

Even at companies that try hard to recruit women, people of color (POC), women of color (WOC), and LGBTQ individuals, leaders report that their efforts to foster diversity are not working. As a result, in 2019, "women and POC comprised only 25 percent and 27 percent of executives, respectively. Only 5 percent of CEOs were women" (p. xii).

Research suggests most people prefer diversity over homogeneity, and people who work in more diverse and inclusive environments are "more engaged, committed, collaborative, and satisfied with their jobs." These findings are true for Gen Zers, who are now entering the workforce and seeking diversity at work (p. 200).

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Three Lessons Toward Inclusifying

"Lesson 1: The playing field is not level." Your organization "will be better off hiring people who have achieved more with less because they demonstrate a wealth of skills that will serve your organization" (p. 33).

"Lesson 2: Systems can create inequality." Laws, customs, and social practices contribute to systemic barriers that disadvantage certain groups (p. 38). Addressing these systems within organizations has positive effects on employee morale and retention. When Google increased maternity leave to eighteen weeks and provided resources for women's employee resource groups, the number of women who left Google was cut in half (pp. 40-41).

"Lesson 3: We live in a post- #MeToo world" (p. 41). The impact of the #MeToo movement continues to unfold in the workplace. Since the height of the #MeToo movement in 2017, women have reported receiving less unwanted sexual attention in the workplace, men have reported less desire to mentor women or be alone with them at work, and women are still reporting instances of receiving backlash for speaking out against sexual misconduct (p. 42).

ARCHETYPE 1: MERITOCRACY MANAGER

"Meritocracy Managers hold the ideal of merit above all else and therefore try to hire, promote, and reward based on performance alone." These leaders usually employ this approach because they grew up working hard and saw their perseverance as why they were successful (p. 46). The main downfall that Meritocracy Managers face is that by focusing on merit to try and capture the best talent, their teams end up homogenous with "competency gaps," or areas where they are lacking skills (p. 48).

To demonstrate an Inclusifying action, "delete the word meritocracy" and define criteria by which to evaluate candidates. For example, replace "I believe in meritocracy" with "I want someone with a 3.5 GPA" (pp. 51, 52). Work to enhance fairness by anonymizing assessments (p. 62). Create a list of the best-qualified candidates and top performers versus the nominated candidates for promotion, compare the lists, and look for diversity disparities (pp. 62, 63). Utilize "aggressive transparency" to focus on being clearer about how decisions are being made. Employees should know when you are making a decision, what you decide, who is involved, and who is affected (pp. 67-69).

ARCHETYPE 2: CULTURE CRUSADER

A Culture Crusader is a leader who prioritizes "creating a team of like-minded people and ends up forgoing the benefits of incorporating different thoughts, perspectives, and backgrounds" (p. xvii). Culture Crusaders excel at engendering the feeling of belonging, but they are missing uniqueness (p. 72).

By only hiring people who are similar to one another, there may be a bias toward one group of people (p. 75). The idea of culture fit is often attributed to the founders of PayPal, who would only hire individuals that fit within the "nerdy" culture. Notably, one of the founders disqualified an applicant because he liked to play basketball, which suggested he would not be a good fit. However, by adopting this culture-fit hiring model, the company ended up being a difficult fit for women (pp. 74-75).

Groupthink is a psychological phenomenon in which individuals are more likely to conform to the group's opinion to avoid discord or standing out, as established in researcher Solomon Asch's classic study. Recently, researchers tested the concept of groupthink in racially diverse groups and found that individuals in such groups are less likely to conform to people who are different from them, prompting more discussion and diversity of opinion (pp. 75-76).

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Examine your team and see what perspectives are missing. Adding different perspectives to your team may result in a more complicated decision process, but the decisions made will be more well-rounded (pp. 91-92).

Create "culture crews," which are groups of diverse people from across the organization who are empowered to make decisions. Culture crews "break down silos by operating like cross-functional task forces" (p. 93).

ARCHETYPE 3: TEAM PLAYER

A Team Player is "a subset of Culture Crusaders (mostly women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ) who work so hard to assimilate with the group that they lose touch with the value their own and others' diverse perspectives add to the team dynamic" (p. xvii). Because they themselves persevered through climbing the corporate ladder despite adversity, Team Players continue to hold women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ individuals to that same high standard (pp. 99-100).

Because Team Players have distanced themselves from their in-group, they might not feel inclined to bring on other women, POC, WOC, or LGBTQ individuals. However, being the only woman, POC, WOC, or LGBTQ person actually decreases their chances of success within the organization because others tend to view them through a stereotypical lens (pp. 110-111).

Team Players can activate empathy by asking their employees to tell them about when they do and do not feel included within the organization. Using this information, Team Players can address the areas that need improvement (pp. 117-118).

Design for dissension by creating a physical space that encourages interaction, such as sitting in a circle rather than a long table (p. 118). Beyond creating a physical space, Team Players can encourage dissenting ideas by doing things like "appointing a devil's advocate," positively reinforcing opposing viewpoints, and asking people to "argue for the viewpoint opposing their own" (pp. 123).

ARCHETYPE 4: WHITE KNIGHT

The White Knight is a leader who takes a paternalistic approach to mentoring women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ people. "White Knights have the best of intentions in supporting and promoting women (and minorities but most often women) because they recognize the inequities that women face in the workplace and want to help rectify them" (p. 130). The difference between a White Knight and an Inclusifyer is that the White Knights' efforts to lift up women do not result in their upward mobility, or the White Knight may receive backlash from others in the office (p. 130).

White Knights can Inclusify their efforts to support women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ people by giving them more responsibility and letting them figure out problems on their own. Often White Knights have a propensity to step in to solve difficult problems, rather than allowing them the space to work through the situation on their own (p. 136).

Encourage "reciprocal mentoring," where both mentor and mentee learn from each other. As a result, women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ people receive the mentorship needed for upward mobility, while creating stronger gender and race relations throughout (pp. 139-140).

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Set up systems for delegating "office housework" evenly. Office housework is non-revenue generating work such as cleaning up after meetings, taking notes at meetings, managing data, and fetching documents during meetings. Women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ people will volunteer for these duties more often because they are trying to make an impact, so creating a rotating schedule for employees to complete these tasks can help delegate this work more evenly (pp. 151-152).

Empower everyone in the organization to be part of diversity and inclusion efforts. "Boston Consulting Group has shown that when men are engaged in gender inclusion programs, 96% of organizations see progress, whereas only 30% of organizations in which men are not engaged see progress" (p. 144).

ARCHETYPE 5: SHEPHERD

"A subset of White Knights, Shepherds are women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ who offer in-group support but in doing so cause people to question their motives, resulting in a less cohesive team" (p. xvii). The main issue that Shepherds face is that they are perceived as giving preferential treatment to people who look like themselves (p. 153).

The main mistakes that Shepherds make include not managing others' impressions and using language that alienates men by blaming masculinity for gender disparities in the workplace (pp. 155-156). Instead, Shepherds should remember that for more productive conversations about inclusivity in the workplace, they should "think right and left - not right and wrong," because diversity and inclusion efforts are more successful when men are brought into the conversation (p. 159).

Create amplification networks, in which women, POC, WOC, and LGBTQ people create a vocal and visible support network for each other by openly supporting each other in meetings (p. 168). Recognize that all people have situations they struggle with and provide an empathetic approach to the concerns of all employees (pp. 172, 173).

ARCHETYPE 6: OPTIMIST

An Optimist is a leader who sees "value in uniqueness and belonging but is not committed to actively creating change and so maintains the status quo through inertia" (p. xvii).

As research has established, intentional steps need to be taken to truly address diversity and inclusivity. The main issue that Optimists face is not taking action because they assume things will improve on their own (p. 178).

Utilize goal-setting theory, which is "the idea that you are able to achieve greater results if you set specific, measurable, agreed-upon, realistic, time-based (SMART) goals," to reach specific diversity and inclusion goals. For example, Medtronic and Starbucks set numeric goals for increasing diversity in their leadership teams (p. 197).

With their natural knack for positivity, Optimists should bring fun into the workplace to bond employees. These could be group activities or even events that celebrate Inclusifyed accomplishments (pp. 200-203).
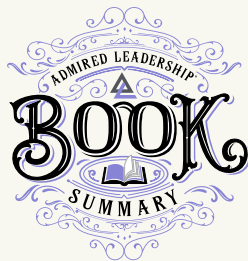
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