

Summary Notes

DEI Special Session – Open Space Format

IBTTA Technology Summit

Sunday, May 5, 2024

Atlanta, Georgia

Keeping Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Top Of Mind: Where Do We Go From Here?

Session Facilitator: Pat Jones, IBTTA



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Opening Remarks

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to Open Space! Thank you for attending today's meaningful conversation on building a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace and industry. I am Pat Jones, your facilitator for today's Open Space/Safe Space Conversation centered around our theme: **How do we keep DEI top of mind?**

We will develop our best thoughts around our theme's issues, opportunities, direction, and experiences during our time together.

I'm reminded of a powerful quote by the great German poet and novelist Goethe who said, "At the moment of commitment, the entire universe conspires to assist you."

His words remind us that we can achieve great things if we set our minds to it.

Transportation connects people and communities. Only when everyone has a seat at the table and access to the same opportunities can we build transportation systems that truly serve us all. That's why we're here today - to have an open, honest dialogue on how to make our workplace and industry more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

This theme is deeply personal for many of us, and I aim to create a safe, judgment-free space for open and honest dialogue.

Here is how this will work. First, this is a safe space. Our ground rules to make sure this remains safe are:

1. **Listen:** We will listen carefully and not interrupt. These discussions are dialogues, not a debate. Collaboration, common ground, understanding, and introspection are keys to a successful dialogue.
2. **Respect:** We agree to listen respectfully to each other without interruptions. Only one person speaks at a time. We agree to share the air equitably and include all voices in the discussion. If you do not wish to share, feel welcome to sit with your thoughts if appropriate. But we challenge everyone to be courageous and share their thoughts.
3. **Personal Experience:** We will speak from our personal, individual experiences. We agree that no one should be expected to speak for their race, ethnicity, or other characteristics.
4. **Patience:** We agree to have patience with each other and acknowledge that we may be at different stages of learning the content and discussion topics.
5. **Privacy:** We agree this is a safe space; any private information shared shall remain confidential. After this event, you may share general ideas from the discussion, but you may not share the personal experiences of others unless permission is given.

Do we all agree with the safe space ground rules?

Great. Now Open Space....

In a few moments, I will ask you to identify any issue or opportunity you see around our theme, **How do we keep DEI top of mind?**

Give it a short title, write it down – with your name – and then announce it in front of the group.

I emphasize giving your issue a short description of 10 words or less. Say what your topic is and post it in the Marketplace.

Make sure that you have some real passion for this issue and that it's not just a good idea for someone else to do.

You will be expected to take personal responsibility for the discussion.

That means saying where and when the group will meet, convening the group, and adding the results to the proceedings.

You may offer as many issues as you like, and if you don't see your issue on the wall at the end of the day, there is precisely one person to complain to: yourself.

Once all the issues are up, we will open the Marketplace, and everybody will join as few or as many groups as they desire. From there on out, you are in charge.

Even though open space is truly open, there are four principles and one law that we need to keep in mind.

The four principles are:

1. Whoever comes are the right people; a reminder that the group and configuration are also organized.
2. Whenever it starts is the right time, a reminder that ideas flow on their own schedule.
3. When it's over, it's over, a reminder to move on when the work is completed. Do the work, not the time.
4. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; it is a reminder to be prepared to be surprised.

Open space also has one law, the law of mobility.

This law creates two possible new roles in open space called bumblebees and butterflies. Bumblebees are an extension of the law of mobility.

The law of mobility allows people to move from group to group as their interest changes.

The metaphor of the bumblebee is used to encourage movement, which, in effect, cross-pollinates the groups.

Ideas are carried from one group to the next and create new ideas. Butterflies are also an extension of the law of mobility.

Where bumblebees cross-pollinate, butterflies bring the power of observation and new ideas to the group.

Not everyone joins the groups in an open space.

Some form a group of one where the person contemplates the ideas created in the Marketplace and adds their thoughts to the pool of developing ideas.

Keeping the four principles in mind and the one law, it is time to get to work.

Along that line, there is one question to start.

What are the issues and opportunities around our theme – **How do we keep DEI top of mind?** – for which you have a real passion and will take genuine responsibility?

And when you have identified an issue, give it a short title and write it down legibly, in large letters, and include your name on the sheet. (I will model the behavior).

As soon as you're ready, announce your title and add it to the Marketplace. Don't wait to be asked; go when you're ready. Time and space are on a first-come, first-served basis.

The rest of you might take a look at the various offerings posted on the Marketplace and decide which group or groups you wish to join to learn or lend your expertise.

As you can see in the Marketplace, there are 12 spaces and two time frames for your discussions. (Point to flip charts and numbered meeting locations around the room).

At (specify time) we will switch to the second timeframe. And at (specify time), we will reconvene in this large circle for a debrief on your experience and discussions.

It may seem a little chaotic at first, but it turns out that chaos is the way the fields of the mind are plowed so that new ideas can grow.

From here on out, you are on your own.

The Marketplace is now open for you to announce your issue and post it in the Marketplace. Go when you are ready.

Session 1: “What’s in a Name?”

Group Facilitator: Peter Ousley, Accenture

1. Does DEI = negative for a larger group of people?
2. Stand firm. Opportunity.
3. Combat bias
4. Understanding/Empathy
5. Curious

Session 2: DEI & Politics

Group Facilitator: Latoya Edwards, Conduent(*)

- Impacting education → long lasting effects.
- State and local election → all politics is local!
- Inspire young people to vote! Meet them where they at.
- DEI impacts everyone!
- PRIMES to commit!
- Internal politics.
- Hold strong to commitment.
- Understand message manipulation.
- Internal culture of uncomfotability.
- Focus on the experience and skill.
- Free speech vs. hate speech.
- Explain DEI better.
- Safe space goes two ways.

Session 3: Minority DBE/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise

Group Facilitator: SN Narasimhan, TekPassage

1. Certification
2. New business
3. Giants

Session 4: DEI Not in My State

Group Facilitator: Marcus Williams, Oklahoma Turnpike Authority

1. Grass roots
2. Adjust hiring process / from within
3. Leadership buy-in

4. Look outside of norm
5. Large net
6. How we do thing
7. Voting

Session 5: Applications 4 Everyone

Group Facilitator: Andrew Tate, Conduent

Different user groups

Customers – Language; income level; smart phone/pc

Users

Supply chain

Proactive vs. reactive

Assisted digital

Walk up

Accessibility

Procurement

Discovery buy-in

Tech to ID and improve

Session 6: Young members to tolling

Group Facilitator: Chadi Chazbek, Kimley-Horn(*)

- What do older generation need to know?
 - Do not assume that you know everything.
 - Open door policy and mean it.
- Make our industry more visible and open up channels/ internships.
- Hire and teach instead of looking for people with experience in tolling.
- Look for transferable skill set.
- More outreach in colleges. (Diversity in colleges)
- Show promotion opportunities for DEI.
- More recruiting outside colleges.
- Intentional integration effort in WFH environment.
- Set them up with mentor.
- Creating an environment for young members to be comfortable advancing their career through stepping for higher positions.

- Benefit/comp packages are not always appealing to younger folks.
- Career development ladders.

Session 7: Everyone is at home.

Group Facilitator: Michael Tamer, Propinisi(*)

- Change top/down
- Remote “first” culture
- Next leaders/mentors
- Not flexible-home
- Makes everything harder
- Team building

Session 8: Unconscious bias

Group Facilitator: Leslie Gervasio, Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission(*)

How do you define unconscious bias?

- Unknowingly making a judgment or decision as it relates to:
 - Race
 - Sex
 - Name (ie., delete (?) on resume) – candidate A or B not by name.
 - College choice
 - Tech bias/credit decision
 - Ageism – Seen both ways - younger not skilled; older generation not keeping up on skills.

What words come to mind when you hear the term unconscious bias?

- Pre-Judging
- Predetermined prejudices
- Discrimination
- Unaware
- Social stereotypes
- Reflection of upbringing
- Not always visible

Work Meetings

- Why don’t certain groups of people get invited?
- Meet a middle ground to be exclusive?

Town hall Events to broaden perspectives – Represent different points of view

What do we need to do?

- Speak out
- Leadership
- “Stereotype” – Don’t trigger traction

Manage your organization’s hiring “brand”

- Hire older people.
- Hire women; you will see an increase in applications.
- Hire more vets. Build a brand that you care about veterans.

Session 9: How DEI has impacted leadership in the workplace

Group Facilitator: Andy

- Stereotypes
- New experiences, ideas

Session 10: Who’s all going to be there? A seat at the “table.”

Group Facilitator: Tabria Lee-Noonan, IBTTA(*)

- Doesn’t feel genuine – not just words (This was in response to a question as to why someone may not want to join the “Table” – the invitation has to be genuine, and often times some may be hesitant if they feel their presence is there are more of a figurehead, rather than there to enact true change)
- We would land back where we started
- I need to make the change (Going to the “Table”, accepting the invitation to be involved even when one may not align with all the goals can still have meaningful impact and lead change)
- Why do you want to be there? (Consider your role and what you want to achieve)
- There’s levels to this
- Find and advocate (find your advocates & champions, be an advocate and champion)
- What change is being enacted?
- Collaboration
- You won’t make everyone happy
- Everybody can’t lead all the time (sometimes your role at the table is a team player, which is just as an important)

Session 11: DEI and Customer Communications

Group Facilitator: Samuel Johnson, Achieve Technology Services

- Try not to exclude
- Offer translation (make it known) digital platform
- Accessing websites
- Plain speak
- 1 on 1 communication
- Knowing workforce
- Demographics (internal) – How can you govern externally?
- Utilize AI

Session 12: How do we measure DEI? DEI metrics?

Monica Castellanos, HNTB

- Define
- Establish baseline
- Statistics (Use) / Facts / Context
- Representation / Balance
- Measure where people are
- Track
- Understand impact / quantify
- Diversity thoughts / ideas
- Disrupt comfort
- Leadership representation
- Road map
- Inclusion / quality
- Measure efforts
- Promotion / progress
- Participation
- Intentional
- Accountability/responsibility
- Leadership/mentorship/guidance
- Create opportunity
- Push forward!

(*)Notes approved by the group facilitator.