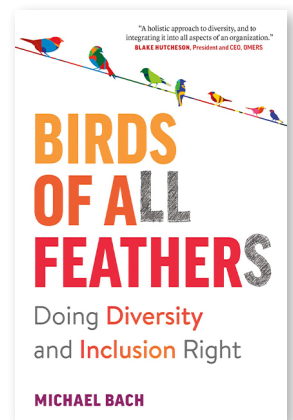


# Birds of All Feathers

Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right

by **Michael Bach**



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## THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

A book isn't going to end racism or inequity. But it can be a start.

This book is a timely call to action for employers, HR professionals, managers, and employees to address diversity and inclusion—because it's not just the right thing to do, but the smart thing to do.

In *Birds of All Feathers: Doing Diversity and Inclusion Right*, founder of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and CEO of CCDI COnsulting Michael Bach helps you develop a better understanding around the nuances of terms like diversity versus inclusion and equity versus equality, and shows how diversity and inclusion can drive innovation and creativity—critical to any business's survival in today's fickle marketplace. You'll learn how to craft a D&I policy that's effective and how to start the work of dismantling systemic racism and inequity by creating safe workspaces where people can bring their whole selves, find advancement, and succeed.

## IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to discover your organization's "why".
- How to implement and sustain beneficial changes.
- How to measure success for your business.
- How diversity and inclusion can drive innovation and creativity.
- How to craft an effective D&I policy.

### Introduction

Diversity” and “inclusion” have become buzzwords. But what do these words mean and why do they matter? And why did you just pick up a book about them?

This book is meant to accomplish two things. First, it’s meant to clearly articulate the WIIFM, or what’s in it for me. What’s in it for our countries? What’s in it for employers? What’s in it for individuals? And yes, there is something in it for each of us. Second, it’s meant to be a how-to guide on D&I for employers.

This book is the culmination of a lifetime of observations. My hope is that people can learn from what I have lived and witnessed and, with a little nudge, start making decisions—using a diversity and inclusion lens—that are in the best interest of themselves, their organizations, and their country.

That isn’t to say that individuals won’t get something out of reading this book. You will definitely (hopefully, probably) glean some new information that will help you think differently about diversity and inclusion. Or, if nothing else, you’ll have a good giggle.

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### D&I Defined

In this chapter, I share with you my understanding of some of the more common terminology used, and specifically, the vocabulary I use throughout the book. Even if you know these words intimately, you may find a new perspective. And I present them in a somewhat specific order, because they build on one another. It’s important that your knowledge grows from the beginning, not from the middle. As such, I’ve ordered the words accordingly to start you at the right place.

The words, phrases, and concepts defined in this chapter include: representation, diversity, inclusion, diversity and inclusion, human rights, equity, equality versus equity, human rights and equity, accessibility, accommodation, intersectionality, visible minorities, racialized people, people of color, handicapped versus person with a disability, SWAM, equity-seeking groups, LGBTQ2+, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, diversity fatigue, reverse discrimination, bona fide occupational requirement, and privilege.

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### The Models of Diversity and Inclusion

There are two models of diversity and inclusion: the social justice model and the creativity and innovation model.

Social justice focuses on addressing societal injustices. The social justice model of diversity and inclusion requires all of us to take responsibility for the sins of our ancestors, and it also assumes we know the sins exist. It assumes we don’t have our own set of biases that affect our decision-making processes. It also requires said straight, white, able-bodied men to give up power, willingly. The social justice model has not been effective in the past sixty-plus years because it requires the group in power—often, if not always, SWAMs—to have zero self-interest and to surrender their positions of power, simply because “it’s the right thing to do.”

Creativity and innovation focus on addressing challenges in society by leveraging the diversity of talent. The secret of the creativity and innovation model is that it addresses “issues of injustice” without calling it that. It appeals to the motivations of those in power (often money) to affect change that will be long-lasting and impactful on society as a whole. Looking at D&I through a lens of creativity and innovation helps ensure that the change you’re working toward is directly connected to the success of your organization and that it ultimately will last!

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### The Business Case

In the coming pages, I focus on three fundamental areas that will have the most impact on your business case: People, Customers, and Brand. There are two other important areas—compliance and supplier diversity.

Your business case (or whatever you choose to call it) addresses why your organization needs to focus on diversity and inclusion. Your business case should focus on three areas: people, customers, and brand. Make sure your business case speaks the language of your organization and simply and succinctly proves the case for D&I. Know the legislation in your city, province, state, and country, and—at a minimum—comply with it.

Your workforce should look like the community that you serve, not necessarily like Canada or the United States overall. If you operate in Toronto or Atlanta, the percentage of your workforce that are people of color should be over 50 percent, but if you operate in Moncton or Boise, it should be significantly less than the national average.

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### The Right Way to Do Diversity

You certainly can do D&I the wrong way if you think that it will happen on its own, just because you believe it will; if you

believe your organization is a meritocracy where everyone is treated equally, but you've never actually examined whether that's true; if you don't apply an appropriate budget and resources to focus on changing your culture; and so on.

In this chapter, I'll outline the steps that every organization should follow if they want to be on the right track with their diversity and inclusion journey. You don't have to start at the beginning if you've been on a diversity and inclusion journey for some time, but if you think you're at step 3 and you never did step 1, guess where you need to start? The steps are in a particular order for a reason—to build something from the ground up. Remember, the house needs a good foundation.

Follow the six steps: make a business case, assess, strategize, execute, measure, repeat. To ensure successful change, it's imperative to follow the steps in order. Change management needs to be considered throughout.

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### Inclusion Over Diversity (aka Talent Retention)

Inclusion comes before diversity. You have to know that your culture is inclusive before you deliberately hire different people. If you're new to this journey (and even if you're not), you have to ensure your culture is open and welcoming to the diversity that you're trying to attract.

Education is critical, and it can take a variety of forms. Communicate, communicate, communicate to ensure your entire organization buys into the D&I journey. Have a learning map. From the day a person starts, there should be mandatory D&I training driven by a D&I learning map that takes each person through a learning journey, from the fundamentals (what diversity and inclusion means and why it is important in your organization) to more complex topics like unconscious bias and intercultural competence.

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### Attracting Difference

Every organization is looking for the holy grail of hiring, the perfect process to ensure acquiring the best talent. But, truth time: the perfect process simply doesn't exist. Every stage of the process sends a message. Ensuring that your process has mechanisms in place to address bias when it occurs—such as conducting panel interviews as opposed to one-on-one, and using a scoring rubric—is the best approach.

Look at your hiring process and do your best to remove as much of the potential bias as possible. Name-blind hiring

isn't a solution to address bias. D&I training is. To attract difference, reach beyond your traditional process to post jobs in different places, do outreach to communities, use job fairs effectively, and spend money where it will count the most.

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### Developing Your People

Talent development, talent advancement, succession planning—whatever you call it, the point is the same: What are you doing to develop your people so that they stay with you longer and advance in their careers? Developing your talent is not about being a nice employer. It's about being a smart employer. The longer a person stays with you, the more value you get from them.

Talent development needs to be deliberate and well-thought-out. Talk to your people and find out what they want, as opposed to what you think they want. Be deliberate and targeted to support the development of your people and the difference in your leadership.

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### Measurement for Success

D&I work is all about change of some kind, and that change should be measured. Measuring diversity is slightly easier than measuring inclusion, because it involves more concrete numbers, which is far simpler and easier to understand than measuring the qualitative data on inclusion. Diversity is a quantitative measurement.

Measuring inclusion is a little more difficult because it's not as clear-cut as diversity. Inclusion can be open to interpretation, but you can still measure qualitatively.

You can and should measure diversity and inclusion, and there are many ways to do so. Measurement helps you understand whether or not your actions are having the intended impact. You need to measure regularly to understand your progress.

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### The Key Ingredients

There are three key ingredients in the D&I space that need to be addressed; in no particular order, these include diversity councils, employee resource groups, and D&I practitioners.

Diversity councils are an underutilized resource that can have a significant impact. Employee resource groups can be a powerful extension of your organization if managed properly. D&I practitioners are the “doers” of D&I, and

you need doers to get things done.

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### From the Leading Edge to the Bleeding Edge

In this chapter, I break down the responsibilities of a true chief diversity officer and why it's critical that employers move to create this position if they want to reach the elusive goal of inclusion.

Companies with a chief diversity officer who has appropriate accountability and authority are at the leading edge of D&I. A CDO touches so much more than people—marketing, product development, customers, and so on. Allocating CDOs an appropriate team, a budget, and a reporting structure with a direct or dotted line to the most senior person sets them up for success.

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### Privilege

People talk about the Oppression Olympics as if it's mythical, but it isn't. It's real.

Privilege is not something that can be taken or received. It's assigned to you, whether you like it or not. There are a significant number of different types of privilege, and you don't have to be a white man to have privilege. The only solution is to use your privilege to the advantage of others who don't share the same privilege you have.

Get involved, even if it's not about you. You don't have to be Black to be part of the Black ERG, or a woman to be part of a women's program. Getting involved makes you an ally. Your help can go a long way toward getting things done.

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### Overcoming Diversity Fatigue

Diversity fatigue is real, and it affects both the individual D&I practitioners and champions and the organization. It's about the exhaustion that comes from the mental or physical efforts related to diversity and inclusion work.

As individuals and as an organization, stop and celebrate your accomplishments so that you don't let the fatigue win. Every win is worth celebrating.

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### What Gets in the Way?

Many things can and do get in the way of successful di-

versity and inclusion: lack of resources; lack of leadership buy-in; competing priorities; alien invasion (one of those doesn't really get in the way so much as destroy life on the planet). But even when all the pieces are in place, failure still happens where we should see success.

Self-interest is usually at the root of failure when D&I doesn't work. Individual, community, and organizational self-interest all influence D&I work. To be successful in D&I, self-interest needs to be put aside, and there must be a willingness to understand one another's needs in order for us all to move forward as one.

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### Conclusion

We need to consider the impact of our actions on others. We don't live in isolation—at least, most of us don't. Even a person who lives completely in isolation could do something that might affect others and never be aware of it.

The only solution to self-interest is to think. Think long and hard about what you're trying to achieve and then determine if someone else might be hurt or benefited by your actions. You can guess the outcome I'd like you to choose.



**Michael Bach** is nationally and internationally recognized as a thought leader in the fields of diversity, equity and inclusion. He is the CEO of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, which he founded in 2012 to help educate Canadians on the value of diversity and inclusion. Bach has received repeated recognition for his work, including being named as one of the Women of Influence's Canadian Diversity Champions in 2011 and 2012, and receiving the 2011 Inspire Award as LGBTQ Person of the Year and the 2011 Out on Bay Street, Leaders to be Proud of LGBTQ Advocate Workplace Award.

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