**Do you have a sense of belonging on your team or within your organization?**

As many of you know, the mission for my work is for “every voice to be heard.” I recently read the book **No Hard Feelings** by Fosslien and Duffy. There are lots of good ideas on how to create a sense of belonging on your team or within your organization. These ideas may fuel you to think of other actions you can take to make everyone feel they belong. ***This matters.***

***What does “belonging” mean to you? Diversity is having a seat at the table, inclusion is having a voice, and belonging is having that voice be heard.***

***To create a sense of belonging on your team:***

·      Use a colleague’s name in conversation. (This requires you to ask and remember how to correctly pronounce it.)

·      Once a month, grab coffee or lunch with a coworker you don’t know that well. Take the opportunity to learn more about who they are and what they do.

·      When new hires start, help them get to know others. When you introduce them to someone, don’t just say, “Hey you two should talk!” Instead find and mention an interest they share (ideally one that’s not work related) to give them a conversational starting point.

·      When someone joins a conversation, take a moment to bring them up to speed.

·      If colleagues go out of their way to help you, thank them.

·      When someone is talking to you, don’t multitask. Stop what you are doing and give them your full attention.

·      If you notice people getting cut off in mid-sentence, make a point to jump in and ask them to continue sharing their thoughts.

·      Always say “hi” to people you pass by or meet up on Zoom. (Lynne’s addition.)

***To create a culture of belonging:***

·      Assume good intentions: if colleagues you know and trust misstep, explain why their behavior made you feel excluded, etc. and propose an alternate action. Give people room to learn from their mistakes.

·      Belonging starts with onboarding: call new hires before their start date to tell them what to expect at orientation and to answer any questions.

·      Assign culture buddies: pair new hires with employees who already understand the culture. These buddies answer questions., give feedback, and help new hires understand that feeling a bit out of place is normal.

·      ***Make sure belonging does not nosedive in meetings: appoint one person to be an objective observer in meetings. That person records group dynamics, noting who speaks the most, who isn’t given any time to speak, and who keeps talking over other people. The observer than recommends ways to improve group dynamics.***

***Advice on creating a sense of belonging for virtual workers:***

·      Once we have earned it, trust us.

·      Set clear expectations. Measure our results.

·      Don’t worry if you don’t get a ping every five minutes.

·      Be mindful of time zones. Delay decision making until you have heard from everyone who should be involved.

·      Send stuff: a physical package, i.e. company swag, a cake, books, or handwritten notes.

·      Help us meet one another. Set up virtual lunches; teatimes.

·      Randomly pair employees with others at the company once a week. There is no set agenda…talk about families, hobbies, favorite shows or books, etc.

 And if you are interested in measuring the “sense of belonging” on your team or within your organization, check out this survey. If you wish to have it administered anonymously, just let me know…no charge to you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AssessBelonging>

Regards  
  
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