



WEBINAR TRANSCRIPT

**ALIGNING YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S DEI
STRATEGY & PRIORITIES
WITH YOUR EXECUTIVE
AND PROFESSIONAL
SEARCHES**

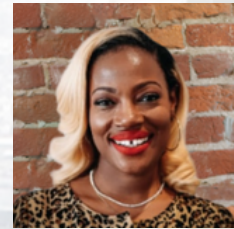
ALIGNING YOUR ORGANIZATION'S DEI STRATEGY & PRIORITIES WITH YOUR EXECUTIVE AND PROFESSIONAL SEARCHES

As a leader of a mission-driven organization, being able to create a diverse, equitable and inclusive (DEI) environment where employees feel a sense of belonging is not only good for the people you employ, it's good for your broader talent pool too. Ensuring that your recruiting and hiring efforts attract, grow and value a workforce that is reflective of the communities you serve at all levels of the organization is a critical imperative. This is even more important for your executive searches and for retaining your high performers as well! During this conversation, you will learn how, where and why to align every aspect of your DEI and talent attraction strategies.

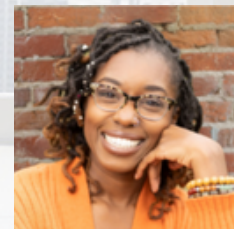
Tune in to the recording and walk away knowing:

- How to align your DEI strategy with your upcoming searches for executive and professional-level talent
- Key ways to identify and minimize bias from your talent attraction strategy through employee offboarding
- Why it is necessary to audit your organization's compensation, feedback and performance management structures to address inequities
- Essential tips on how to create a culture of belonging that aligns with your commitment to DEI and career campaigns

SPEAKERS



Myra Briggs
Former Managing Director, Impact Search Advisors



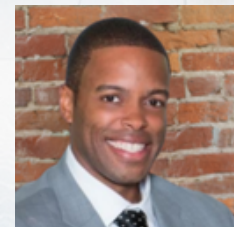
Sophia LaFontant
Consultant, Search, Impact Search Advisors

[See Sophia's bio.](#)



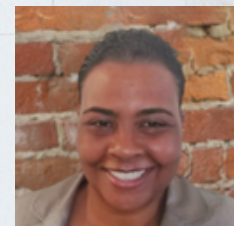
Michael McElroy
Team Leader & Senior Consultant, Recruitment Outsourcing, Impact Search Advisors

[See Michael's bio.](#)



Bryan W. Jackson
Senior Consultant, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Justice

[See Bryan's bio.](#)



Angela Saunders
Former Consultant, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion*

**Renamed Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Justice as of July 2022*

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Hello, and thank you for joining us for Nonprofit HR's Virtual Learning Education Event. This session is entitled Aligning Your Organization's DEI Strategy & Priorities with Your Executive and Professional Searches. My name is Atokatha Ashmond Brew and I am Managing Director of Marketing & Strategic Communication for Nonprofit HR.

Here's just a little about Nonprofit HR before we get started. Since 2000, Nonprofit HR remains the country's leading and oldest firm focused exclusively on the talent management needs of the social sector, including nonprofit associations, social enterprises and other mission-driven organizations. We focus on consulting efforts that cover the following areas: Strategy & Advisory, HR Outsourcing, Total Rewards, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Search. Nonprofit HR was founded with one goal in mind: to strengthen the social sector's talent management capacity by strengthening its people. Today's conversation will be led by Myra Briggs, Managing Director for Impact Search Advisors. She will be joined by a panel of consultants of experts in talent management and diversity, equity and inclusion.

And now, a little about Myra Briggs. Myra serves as a Managing Director for Impact Search Advisors and brings over 18 years of experience in executive and professional search and leadership development. She is responsible for the strategy and guidance of the firm's Search practice, including building and leading a team of executive and professional-level search and research consultants responsible for engaging in client-facing work nationally.

About Angela Saunders: Angela Saunders works with Nonprofit HR's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion team to facilitate DEI training solutions and assessment services for nonprofits and social sector clients. Angela is passionate about DEI work and co-leads Nonprofit HR's DEI Advisory Team, which is tasked with guiding leadership on internal DEI matters and developing the strategic plan to establish the foundation and direction of the firm's DEI effort.

About Bryan Jackson: Bryan provides subject matter expert advice, insight and strategic direction to clients. He oversees complex client engagements, manages projects to completion and designs and facilitate DEI's training solutions and assessment services to partners and stakeholders. As a passionate trainer and driven operations and people leader, Bryan has worked with the Washington Nationals Baseball Team, Arlington Public Library System and the Alexandria Department of Human Services.

About Michael McElroy: Michael has over 14 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector as a people and program manager. He has worked in a wide variety of HR functions, including full lifecycle recruiting, onboarding, training, employee engagement, diversity, equity and inclusion and employee assessment.

2 | Impact Search Advisors Webinar Transcript

On to Sophia LaFontant: As a consultant on our Search team, Sophia finds the best and brightest candidates to fulfill employment opportunities for Nonprofit HR clients. She is passionate about the professional development of new candidates and the growth of Nonprofit HR's Search practice.

On to you now, Angela, to share a little about Nonprofit HR's DEI practice.

Angela Saunders: Thank you, Atokatha.

Among the core values of Nonprofit HR are to be inclusive, authentic and accountable. And so, we live these values through our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

This is a commitment that extends not only to Nonprofit HR employees, but also to the social impact sector that we serve. Our DEI practice area focuses on thought partnering with social impact organizations to create equitable, inclusive workplaces. And we do this by conducting comprehensive equity assessments, devising strategies and roadmaps to prioritize DEI based on the assessment findings and providing customized training, facilitation and coaching in racial-justice-centered topics.

I'm going to turn it over to Myra to talk to you about the Search practice.

Myra Briggs: Thanks, Angela. It's a pleasure to be here with everyone today, and you'll be hearing my voice a lot because I'll be moderating the remainder of the conversation. But before we get into that, I just want to spend a little bit of time talking to you about Impact Search Advisors, which is the client-facing talent acquisition arm of Nonprofit HR. Some of the services that we cover under Impact Search Advisors are executive search, professional search, recruitment outsourcing and interim leadership. Our process is bespoke and comprehensive, which are not usually two words that you hear together. We're able to accomplish that for our clients by really digging in and learning not only about your mission, but what you hope to accomplish through that mission with the candidates that we select, and ultimately the staff that you bring on through your organization.

Before we get started with the conversation, though, I really did want to spend some time to qualify our capabilities in even discussing this topic. Through Impact Search Advisors, and along with and in partnership with our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion practice, we have achieved monumental success, that's what I'll call it, in the area of moving the needle for diverse leadership, as well as diversity recruiting throughout the nonprofit sector. What we have on the screen here are numbers that we're very proud of through January of 2020 showcasing the demographics by gender, race and ethnicity of executives and professionals hired through the client-facing work at Nonprofit HR and through Impact Search Advisors.

**Aligning Your Organization's DEI Strategy & Priorities
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As you can see, we are not only intentional, but successful behind that intention in really being able to drive forward the missions of not only our clients, but also assisting them with developing those strategies around diversity, equity and inclusion and ensuring that they're able to realize those strategies and their commitment to those strategies through their people and through their talent acquisition programs.

And so, before we get started, I just want to talk a little bit about how it will interact with one another to undergird what Atokatha has already said. We will be taking questions throughout the time together. So, if you want to pop them into the questions pane as you have them, we will pause periodically throughout the course of the presentation to answer some of those questions.

I'm joined by four fantastic experts in not only diversity, equity and inclusion but also, talent management and recruiting. So, we've also been able to record a number of the questions that you sent over ahead of the conversation today, and we'll also be covering some of those.

Before we get started, we'll just lay out the landscape of the conversation today, because we're going to cover four general areas. First, we're going to talk about how to align your DEI strategy with your upcoming searches for executive and professional-level talent. This is something that many of our clients are calling upon us to do, whether they reach out to us for search first or they reach out to us for DEI first. Eventually, those two end up crossing one another, so we figured we start right there and tackle the topic of, how do we align those two strategies? We're really excited about sharing our concepts with you there.

Then, we'll move on to talking about key ways to identify and minimize bias from your talent attraction strategy through employee offboarding. I know you guys were probably really with me until we got to the word offboarding, because we normally talk about onboarding and how we welcome those new employees. But we're going to really drive the point home for you on how you can connect your employer brand, as well as set yourself up for success for future hires, by paying just as much attention to the offboarding of staff as you do to the onboarding of staff, and really making sure that that process is equitable.

Then, we're going to move on and talk a little bit about why it is necessary to audit your organization's compensation feedback and performance management structures to address any inequities, which is something that not only the members of these teams can help you with, but also, as Atokatha mentioned, we do have a Total Rewards practice that is absolutely prepared and qualified to assist you with auditing these things. And we'll talk a little bit about how you should approach that process.

And finally, we'll give you some essential tips and tricks on how to create a culture of belonging that aligns with your commitment to DEI and career campaigns. Recently, we've all seen the "B" added to the end of the DEI and that these stands for "belonging," which is just as important as the other three components of the term that have become so popular and known to all of us that are working on talent management strategies. And it's vitally important that we ensure that our teams, as well as the members of our leadership teams, also feel that they belong. And we'll talk to you a little bit about ensuring that and aligning that with your career campaigns as well.

So, without further ado, I think we'll get started with our conversation, and jump right into our first topic. Before we get to that, though, I do want to kind of force interaction just a little bit and in doing so, what Atokatha will be doing is putting in a question at the top of each part that we would like for you all to respond to in the questions pane.

So, the first question that she's going to put up here is, what is your organization doing to align their DEI and talent strategies? So, write in the questions pane, you can type your answer there. And we'll cover some of those, and I'll touch on them. We may even discuss a few that we think that others would want to talk about a little bit deeper as we're going on.

But while we're waiting for that, I'm just going to jump right in and call on my good friend Angela. What strategies can an organization use to interrupt bias in their talent acquisition process?

Angela Saunders: I always say it's first important to start with a job ad. And so, the job ad language can be enhanced by ensuring that you include a commitment to diversity statement. You want that kind of language. Most job ads have EEO statements, but that's sort of legalistic speak. And so, you want to have a commitment to diversity that really just invite your candidates to want to be a part of your organization because they see that you're inclusive. You can use resources like Gender Decoder to help you avoid excluding particular genders. It's also important to avoid specific words that might be off-putting in your job ad. So you don't want to say things like, "Native English speaker only," or "Legal citizens only." Those kinds of things are exclusionary to a lot of candidates.

You also want to be thoughtful about where you're placing your job ads, and make sure that you're including job boards that target candidates across the various dimensions of diversity, which would include your race, disability, age, sexual orientation or your veteran status. Set a minimum number of candidates from diverse backgrounds that you want to have interview. So, for example, maybe have 20% of your applicants be from underrepresented groups. And then, pause that recruitment process if you feel like you're not getting there, and then you're going to try to cast a wider net and instances where that minimum is not met.

Then finally, when you're reviewing resumes, take a blind review approach. And so, when you remove those things like people's names, where they live, et cetera, that allows you to screen candidates on their readiness to take on the role without having any knowledge of their names or other factors that may unfairly influence at the evaluation on their resume. It's really important that you keep those bias interrupters in mind as you go through this process.

Myra Briggs: Thanks so much for that, Angela. And I did pop the link for the Gender Decoder in our organizer chat, which Atokatha will share with the group. It's a fantastic tool. And when we're talking about tools and resources, we had a lot of questions about job ads, where things can be posted to attract or to even just get in front of the diverse candidates in a diverse audience—stepping outside of the box from your Indeed, LinkedIn, CEO Update and some of the places that are more mainstream.

And I want to call on Sophia, not just to talk about the job posting sites, but because Sophia is our resident distribution list expert. I mean, Sophia has done so much work around developing lists that will not only promote diversity, but a number of other niche areas as well.

Sophia, I'm not going to pigeonhole you into your response, but just please make sure you include some of those posting sites in your response. But as we're talking, could you talk a little bit more about how organizations can be proactive in their approach to interrupt some of these biases?

Sophia LaFontant: Absolutely. I definitely want to piggyback on what Angela was saying about including those groups. Those are very important. As a couple examples of groups to share, for those who are thinking, "Oh, wow, I have to spend money," that's not always the case. There are a ton of Google Groups that specifically focused on certain groups. We have Black Beltway, which would be an African American Google Group for those that are in the DMV area. You also have an organization called Jobs That Are Left, that is a Google Group. These are free options. Jobs That Are Left is literally those who are more liberal leaning, so you know that you're going to get a good cluster of those individuals that might also be a part of the LGBTQIA and others. You also have groups like Green Latino's, which is focusing on those who are environmental friendly and LatinX. So, you also want to think about the fact that some of these job boards not just focus on minorities, but also focus on individuals that have certain skills. It's important when we're looking for jobs to pinpoint the skills we're looking for.

And then, we also have another job board that is called Inclusive, and Inclusive is for all individuals who are professionals that are persons of color of the global majority that are not in the tech business. So, again, a lot of times, you will see a lot more tech-driven job boards in Groups. And sometimes that's not what you're looking for. So, you want to definitely make sure that you're looking in a way where you're not just finding individuals, but also looking for the skills that you want.

But another way to be proactive in the approach, aside from job description and avoiding certain languages, what Angela discussed, I would also say is, be open to how your interview techniques and how you're reaching out to candidates. Know that not everyone is going to be comfortable in the same way. There are different platforms for recording. There are different platforms for text and how you reach out to individuals because you also want to think about time, keeping candidates excited and interested in the role and response is important. I always like to share an example of interviewing someone who might have diverse abilities, and knowing that that person can still do the role and that their ways of interviewing techniques may be different.

I've interviewed individuals who have requested the length of time for each question because they want to set a timer because that is how they measure themselves and feel as though they are doing well. And then, in addition to that, they said, they needed everything to be written down in order for them to answer it. So, I told them, "Not a problem. I will email you the questions in advance." Literally, at that moment. Not like the day before, not to give anyone an advantage over a person. Or if we're in Zoom, like we are right now in a virtual space, I can put it in the chat for you, so you don't have to sit and write down what you hear me say. So also, leave yourself to being open to interviewing people differently and know that they'll be able to show up if you provide them the circumstances that make them feel safe and comfortable.

Myra Briggs: Thank you for that, Sophia. One of the things that I love is a good case study, and everyone is looking for examples. Show me someone that's done this before.

So, Michael, you have done not only many searches within the Search practice and recruitment outsourcing, but also in other areas of client-facing work. And I'd love just to hear from you in what ways have you actually seen your clients align these two strategies as they are embarking upon searches.

Michael McElroy: Sure. Thanks, Myra. Yeah, a few thoughts about this.

I mean, one thing I just want to say in general about strategy is, whether it's for your recruiting or just any strategy related to DEI, remembering that the business case for it. That, in addition to being the right thing to do, it is also proven, scientifically proven, that well-managed diverse teams are more productive than homogenous ones. There was a study that McKinsey did a few years ago saying that well-managed diverse teams were 35% more profitable than homogeneous ones, and that applies to the nonprofit space as well as the for-profit space.

When it comes to the search itself, we've talked about some of this. One thing I'm having organizations do is really looking at the documents that have just been in circulation for so long. We're talking about this a little bit about using some of that coded language that shows up in the interview documents and job descriptions.

Pay attention to that job description that maybe you created 10 years ago and that's been getting gradually refreshed over the years. Language, like "his or hers," for example, may have been perfectly appropriate 10 years ago, and is it now?

Thinking about professionalism, what does "professionalism" actually mean? Professionalism is an individual's very specific interpretation of what a qualified professional may be.

And then also, "cultural fit" is another one, I think about a lot. Culture shouldn't be stagnant. A culture should be constantly evolving, growing and changing. You know, we'd all be working for the Sterling Cooper Price—whatever the Mad Men firm was—if a culture never changed and evolved. So, these are the kinds of things to be paying attention to and kind of lean into the change.

Then, there's some of the barriers and obstacles, so that's what I look at. When I work with clients, I look at, where are there barriers in their hiring process? I was a theater major, that is not particularly related to my work—maybe a little bit in this exact moment—but not particularly related to my daily work. That was 15 years ago, I've had a whole life since then and I'd hope that I'd be evaluated on the totality of my work, not just some decisions I made at 16–24 years old.

I also used to work for an organization that worked primarily with young people facing adversity, many of whom weren't necessarily on a college trajectory. But our organization had a requirement that our staff had a specific degree. So, that just doesn't make any sense to me. Who would make more sense to hire as a coordinator for mentees? Someone who went to some liberal arts college across the country, or someone who's from the community that the mentees live in and who maybe was a participant in the program themselves? So, really take a look at the practices that may be ingrained and challenge all of them throughout every step of the process, whether it's interviews, resume reviews and any of the practices that you have in your recruiting process.

Myra Briggs: Thank you so much for that, Michael. That's something that we're beginning to see more and more. Specifically, the last example that you gave, where, whether it be in professional-level roles or executive leadership positions, organizations are really beginning to see that the key to mission sustainability, which is what everyone's thinking about right now—I mean, COVID has forced us into really solidifying the sustainability of our organizations and thereby the missions that we serve—is really looking at mission sustainability through the lens of really being able to align the background of the executive leadership team, and those who are actually doing the work of the organization, with the backgrounds of the constituents that the organizations serve. And really being able to, like you said, at the top of your comments, make the business case for connecting the two is a really great point to make.

Bryan, you and Angela are our survey people, our assessment and training and development folks, and I know that when you all are beginning this work with clients, one of the key elements is gauging their readiness, because then we have to really see where are we going to start? Tell us a little bit about how you gauge an organization's readiness for this work. And for an organization that's just starting, where do they start? We're just starting out on our journey, how do we relay that and all of that?

Bryan W. Jackson: Absolutely, thank you, Myra.

Well, the first thing is, before you even start on your DEI cultural journey, you have to ask yourself some basic questions as an organization. And, even if you're an organization that's on a race, equity, DEI journey, it is always good to look into what you've done thus far to get to where you currently are and identify where you want to go. Revisiting is the best way to have a game plan on moving forward. You have a lot of internal, in-house, key stakeholders, that can provide you with some essential information, so do a readiness assessment with HR, do also this same readiness assessment with senior leadership. Acquire your board, engage with them and then, also talk to your staff.

When posting, you have to make sure that you have a broad range of where you are posting some of this information, you just can't let the work do the work for you. LinkedIn can only go so far, but what relationships are you establishing with HBCUs, with some of our Indigenous brothers and sisters that are out there that have organizations, as well as, how are you developing a pipeline of talent? Imagine what this will look like for your organization if you have a pipeline of talent and you don't have to revisit this every year, because you know that two to 10 folks are going to be coming in and out of your door.

The other piece, too, and I think that this often gets lost, but this is essential, and that is, do you have a mentor in practice? Now, it goes above and beyond just putting a person that is a senior in front of someone that is not. You have to have someone that has cultural competence. A way that you would communicate or converse with someone that identifies as LGBTQIA+, and that's not what you are, you can be the tie that binds and have been wanting to stay long term or the tie that breaks and for them to be looking for role when they're currently in a role.

You also want to ask yourself to do you have money devoted to this practice? Now, we're not talking about thousands and thousands of dollars, \$100 can go a very long way. And it has to be, it has to be real money, and it can't be, what I call, that fake money in that it's all good, because our board knows we have it, out-facing folks know we have it, but when it comes time to access it, we don't have it any more.

Myra Briggs: Right.

Bryan W. Jackson: And so, you want to make sure that, when you commit to this work, you know that this is a journey where often we'll say that the best step in this journey is the first step. But from there, you have to be willing to continue to walk the path, and be open to what will be shared with you as well as, once people know that this is the journey that you are on, you will have committed people in-house that will be willing to do some of the work for you and with you.

Myra Briggs: Thank you for that, Bryan. Before we move on to our next topic, we'd love to see the answers to our initial question. What is your organization doing to align their DEI and talent strategies? Are we ready for some of those answers?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yeah, Myra, quite a few things came in. I'll just read off a few of them.

Someone said, "Planning to incorporate it in the strategic planning process."

Someone said, "Ensuring diverse hiring pools, minimizing bias in the hiring process, ensuring reviewing all processes with an equity lens."

Someone else shared, "Engaging a consultant to guide us through the DEI program design and implementation."

Someone said, "Our EIB and HR have a shared strategy and we will meet on a weekly basis to move forward with our work."

And another person said, "We've started incorporating our DEI initiatives in our postings and included those videos from employees on our careers page."

Those are several things that are shared, among many other posts.

Myra Briggs: That's wonderful, I heard a lot about aligning the strategies and making sure that we're meeting regularly, which is fantastic. I also heard a lot in there about employer branding and really letting that commitment be known, which is so very important when really trying to not only align the strategies, but to achieve the goals around diversity, equity and inclusion as it pertains to that talent strategy. So, I won't spend too much time, because I'm sure we could make an entire conversation out of any one of these topics. We'll want to make sure that we're able to give each people time to each.

And so, before we move on, and we'll get our second question for the audience posted which is, what does your organization do to support a quote-unquote soft landing for offboarded staff?

And so, if you want to go ahead and put your answers to that question in the questions pane. And it's OK if you haven't done anything, so if you haven't done anything, I'm expecting some questions to pop up in the questions pane about how you can actually do that.

While we're gathering that insight from you all, I'm going to kick it off to Bryan to start us off this time. And Bryan, can you just share with the group why offboarding is as important or as equally important as onboarding?

Bryan W. Jackson: Absolutely, thank you, Myra. And you said it—it is just as important, if not more important, because you are engaging with someone that has institutional knowledge. When we often onboard, they're coming in with an idea of the organization. As someone is departing, they are able to speak to policies, procedures, relationships, culture. But what is essential and what is key is, how comfortable and safe in that space do they feel to disseminate that information? The worst thing that can happen is to have someone that has institutional knowledge to disrupt some of the bias procedures that may be going on within an organization, but they don't feel safe in being able to share that information. And so, what then leaves is this information that could be beneficial into disrupting some of these inequities.

The other aspect of offboarding that is essential is that you just need to listen. A lot of things can be shared with nuances, and how safe is the space for someone to articulate authenticity? And if there is something that is not being said as a practitioner of being able to receive that information, you have to be able to take some of the nuances to say, "You know what? They may not have specifically said gender inequality, but there is something that I need to make sure that I highlight, so that this isn't something that continues moving forward."

So that's what I would say: Always see the offboarding process as just as essential as folks coming in.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. And I think that listening thing is so very important. My grandmother always said you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. You're supposed to listen twice as much as you talk, and I think that we can definitely apply that to the offboarding policy because, like you said, institutional knowledge—all of the things that someone may not have been comfortable saying knowing they have to come back to this place tomorrow. Really capitalize on that unique opportunity.

So, let's take a little bit more time talking about the offboarding process and how it might influence an organization's DEI strategy. Angela, can you talk us through some of the ways that the offboarding process might influence the strategy?

Angela Saunders: Absolutely. When you're having an offboarding process, in order for it to be effective, it needs to be a mechanism that allows you to get honest, constructive feedback on the employment experience. We want information like, how equitable or inclusive did the exiting employee feel that the employer was? And so, the best way to do that is to add questions to your exit interview. You want to be intentional about gauging exiting employees feelings of belonging. You want to ask things like, did you feel comfortable bringing your authentic, whole self to work? Did you feel like you belong at this organization? And you could also be more direct in your questions about fair treatment. So, you want to think about things like, did you feel that you are treated fairly by your supervisor?

These kind of targeted questions will help you to get a feel for the perceptions of the workplace, equity and inclusion, and then you have to act on that information that you've received. Once you listen, you want to make sure that you're continually focusing on DEI to make sure that it's a workplace where people want to be and not just getting this information when people are exiting.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. Thank you for that, Angela.

And so, I'm a certified Six Sigma Green Belt and one of the bases of change management is getting that executive sponsor because everybody wants to know what happens if we don't comply with the new policy, if we do not modify based upon the new process.

And Sophia, I'd love for you to spend some time talking about, how can offboarding positively or negatively affect an organization's employer brand? Because that's one of the things that, even before we get to the point of the DEI strategy, people understand and we want to make sure that we're seen and viewed positively in the marketplace. But we know wherever there's a positive, there's potential for the negative. So, share with us some of the ways that that offboarding process can positively or negatively affect.

Sophia LaFontant: The way I see it is your employee brand, directly contributes to the longevity of your organization, be it in retention or in the interested applicants that decide to apply to your role.

An employee who leaves on good terms, they still left, so we have to consider that they leave for something better, were they leaving for work-life balance? Were they leaving for salary? Were they leaving for culture? Or were they leaving for technology issues? Literally feeling like, my job could be faster and more efficient if we used a different system for something.

Recognize that even someone who leaves on good terms will have valuable information to give you that can open up your employee brand and make your organization more appealing to interested applicants, different generations of individuals applying or different groups of individuals in different cultures wanting to work at your organization. And then of course, we have to remember that if someone leaves on negative terms, there are outlets for them to be able to discuss exactly what it was that left them in dismay.

If their offboarding process is not a great process that allows them to answer questions such as what Angela said, you can end up with negative reviews on things like Glassdoor, within Facebook groups or other Google groups that we just discussed, where people are actually posting jobs. People that are part of these groups are able to leave a comment below the posting of the job and say, "Hey, I just left this place, and that job might not be the best fit for this reason." So we have to remember that the offboarding process also gives you that opportunity, it may just be 30 minutes, to kind of clean up and make some promises so that this person still walks away from the organization, but does not walk away from the organization with the intention of leaving a bad word of mouth out there in the ether.

Myra Briggs: That's great. Sophia.

I would encourage everyone on the call, if you A) have never checked your organization's Indeed or Glassdoor review or B) have not checked it in a while, that's your homework assignment for today, to go out into the fullness of the internet and see what those that are currently or have been previously at your organization have to say about your organization. You can validate the truth of what's out there, but you need to know, you need the information. And in my mind, that is employer branding 101, to really just be able to see what's out there about your organization. It's just good information to have and potentially a good place for you to start around realigning what your internal commitments are with how your organization is viewed in the marketplace.

All right, Michael. Well, let's talk about some horror stories that you may have heard. One of the things I love about working in this consulting environment is it's like a pressure cooker for experiences in that we're working with our full portfolio of clients, so we have so many opportunities to collect stories and conduct case studies. So, Michael, I'm sorry, tell us something about a horror story that you may have seen or heard about a candidate's offboarding experience from an organization.

Michael McElroy: Sure. Well, fortunately, many savvy applicants don't bash their former employer during the interview, but if you've been a part of enough interviews, you can often intuit and read between the lines a little bit. I certainly try to do that when I'm interviewing candidates.

There are a few things I was thinking about. One, this past year has been inconsistent work-from-home policies. I mean, I get it from an organizational standpoint, it's been almost impossible to know what to do. At Nonprofit HR, we have some resources and thoughts and surveys that we've done about return to workplace and the work-from-home virtual workplace. But organizations having shifting targets and so, employees never feel bored, never feel settled and never feel like they know what their plan is going to be. So that's been a big theme with employees sharing why they're leaving organizations.

There's also I think an uptick in candidates who are leaving jobs pretty soon after they start. I mean, there's some generational differences there. But also, I think, in the past year and a half, there's this concept of the realistic job preview in recruiting, which is being a positive force for what you're about but also being realistic about it and not sugarcoating it. And as it ties to DEI, that really can be transparent about an inclusive workspace. It's one thing to just hire your way out of a problem. It's another thing to truly have an inclusive workspace, and your candidates, your diverse candidates, will know as soon as they're in the door, and they're actually working there every day. They'll see through whatever facade there may have been early on during the hiring process, once they're actually at the organization. So that's the reason why a lot of people have left.

One other thing that I hear or intuit sometimes during conversations with candidates is that an employer has taken their decision to leave personally or to look for other jobs personally. And like Sophia was saying, this all circles back to employer brand and employer reputation. If your CEO or whoever your manager is stops speaking to you after you share that you're going to leave an organization, that's going to show up on the Glassdoor for an organization. In addition to that, your employees all talk to each other and so, you may have a culture problem and an engagement problem with your employees if they're leaving, and it may undo many years of a positive work relationship if they leave with a somewhat bitter taste at the very end of their appointment.

One quick sidebar is just a little change that I want to throw out there, a lot of employees have been laid off this year. This has been a really hard year for everyone. I just want to put a little plug in there to challenge your thoughts and your pre-conceived notions about what someone who is laid off, what that means, because there are a lot of really highly qualified employees who've been laid off this past year and a half because of perfectly legitimate reasons. I just wanted to make a plug for that so I don't forget at some point today.

Anyone else have any horror stories related to offboarding or that they've heard throughout their travels?

Myra Briggs: Bryan, I think you had something you wanted to share. You didn't think I was going to let you off.

Bryan W. Jackson: I was going to swerve it like the Matrix, but you called me out.

I'll just make it very short and that is, make sure that as an organization, if someone decides to leave that this information doesn't become public. There was a story that I was privy to by someone that I know within a restaurant. There were high booths, so you couldn't see the person on either side, but the person on one side recognized the voice and heard the story of a person that had just been let go.

And so, in the future, when that person was leaving the organization, they had no trust in being able to share their authentic story with that particular person. And so, it's not necessarily a horror story, more so of you don't know what you don't know, but don't share what you don't have to share. It's not personal. And I love what Michael said in that things are changing. We're not our parents' generation, staying somewhere for 30 or 40 years.

However, if people do leave nine times out of 10, it is for the better. And you have to embrace that growth, you have to embrace that change and you have to embrace the fact that they spent a time with you and that's valuable time.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. Absolutely. Just to further dig into what Michael said, I absolutely love the concept of, you can't hire your way out of the problem. Because eventually, something happens in the marketplace in the ether where people begin to recognize, "Hey, they're hiring for an HR Director again?" And we hear that in our conversations with candidates. And they'll say, "I saw this job posted six months ago, so what happened with that?" And keep in mind, let me quantify that the candidates that you want to hire, the consummate professionals, as we call them, or the folks that are really going to be a positive add to your organization, they are going to be asking these questions. Why are they hiring their third Finance Director in two years? Is it because of growth, or is this the same position that they're hiring for over and over again?

And just to piggyback off of another point that was made, you're absolutely correct. This is a unique environment in which there are a number of people who are currently not working and it's not their fault that they're not working, whether they were laid off, positions were eliminated or whatever the case may be. And as you are considering potential risks or anything like that, do consider researching some outplacement services that might be available, which would actually be a counselor who can assist those employees. Who, if you could keep them, you definitely would want to—or even some people who you don't want to keep. You're just saying, "For employer branding or for the sheer humanity of the work that our organization does, we want to promote them on to their next opportunity," as opposed to just letting them go and being able to fend for themselves.

Everyone that's at your organization, it stands to reason, has made one contribution or another. Even if they just highlight deficiencies in your recruitment process, it was a lesson that you needed to learn. And so, as a result of that, considering outplacement services for anyone who's leaving your organization is another tangible way that you can really help to solidify and create that soft landing.

I do want to pause here, Atokatha, and see if we had any questions or any answers to our question at this point that we want to cover before we move into the second half of our presentation.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, we did have some responses to the last question. I'll read a couple of them, and then we had a couple of questions that I thought you might want to hear. The first one is, in terms of the responses, "We let departing employees know that we love boomerang employees and would welcome them back with open arms."

Another person said, "We encourage boomerangs and give examples of folks coming back to us."

One person said, "I ask employees to be candid and I confirm with them that information will not be shared until they have left the company." And even then, I'm sure that this person was saying that they would work to make sure some information is anonymous.

Another comment was, "We tried to keep them connected to the organization with an exit conversation, severance, career coaching, layoffs, et cetera for soft terminations and the ability to file a complaint if needed. We want an ex-employee to still be a brand ambassador."

And there were two questions that were posted. One was a request to share a bit more about stay interviews and another one was asking to dig a little bit deeper on what this concept of a soft onboarding really means.

Myra Briggs: A soft offboarding or a soft onboarding?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Offboarding.

Myra Briggs: OK, who wants to tackle stay interviews? Anyone? I'll kick it off and then, maybe it'll prompt some additional responses.

Stay interviews are the biggest way to combat exit interviews. If you're not conducting stay interviews, you will 100% be conducting exit interviews at some point. We love stay interviews because the first thing that it does is it really forces you to conduct the exercise of identifying the high performers within your organization. Once you have identified those high performers, and that could be everyone, we would love for it to be everyone. And whether or not it is, it's really a matter of checking in to make sure that you are doing your part as the employer to deserve for them to stay, quite honestly. It puts you in the position of hearing the information.

But one thing that I always say, do not ask a question that you are not prepared to actually respond to the response to—meaning that if you are asking questions around compensation, if you're asking questions around structure, if you're asking questions about reporting relationships, do not ask that question if you are not prepared to change it, based upon the answer that you receive. That's something that will most assuredly minimize the trust that your staff have in the process of those stay interviews.

So, as you're conducting them, the one piece of advice that I would give is, number one, don't be afraid to ask hard questions. But when I say hard questions, I'm talking about things like, "Tell me about the day that you showed up here and no longer wanted to work here." Or "Tell me about a time, when you, actually, in the middle of the day, pulled up LinkedIn and started looking at what else was out here. What caused you to do that?" Or "Tell me about a staff meeting where you left and you really felt like, boy, we are missing the mark." And those are some of the questions that are really going to help drive you toward, what can we do to realign culture, realign strategy, realign the way that we're interacting with our teams, to make sure that we are encouraging them to stay? And, I think that those stay interviews are absolutely essential. They don't have to be super formal, but you should definitely be having them.

Anyone have anything to add? Michael?

Michael McElroy: Yeah.

So, as this relates to recruitment and hiring, and I don't have a flashy, catchy name for this, so maybe I need to find one or come up with one. But it's also gathering feedback from your recent hires. No better way to learn how to improve your hiring process than to connect with the people who just went through it, so that's definitely a practice I would implement with some degree of regularity every time you go through a hiring cycle. Connect, whether it's individually or in small groups with people you've hired, and get their feedback about their experiences, so you can really understand it from the candidates end as well.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely, absolutely. Angela?

Angela Saunders: Yes, I would just add that you're right. It's a great employee retention tool and some of those very same questions that you would ask on an exit interview you can ask when they're staying. Do you feel like you belong? Do you feel like you bring your authentic self? Are you being treated fairly? So you can ask those same questions and get that honest, constructive feedback and as you say, Myra, be prepared to act on that. Because if people are sharing with you, "Yes I'm staying," but you still have cultural challenges, then you need to be prepared to shift the dynamic that's going on in your organization.

Myra Briggs: That's absolutely right, absolutely right. Any tips for that soft offboarding that we want to share as a team? Those outplacement services, I can't think of a better way to soften the blow of an involuntary offboarding. When someone is being let go from an organization, but you're letting them know, "We've set you up with someone who will actually assist you in finding your next opportunity," it really does show that you care. It also relieves a bit of that anxiety from someone going into an uncertain job market, especially when they were not planning to previously. Anything else to add, anyone?

Sophia LaFontant: I would say that it would be nice if supervisors would voluntarily to say to the person, "If you ever need a reference letter or a reference check..." Because, I feel like there are so many people who leave an organization and they're kind of unsure of whether or not their supervisor, colleagues or anyone would say anything. Because if you're not doing the stay interviews, if you're not constantly talking to your employee about their work except when it's time for the annual review, at this point from an employee perspective, I only know how you feel about me when you're evaluating everything that I've done for the year. And it's important to just let a person know, "I am here to support you after this." And so, I think that that would also be a nice way to kind of let the offboarding process be a soft landing.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely, absolutely. Thank you for that. But we'll move on and get some more questions as we are continuing the conversation. But let's move on to aligning and addressing any inequities with the organization's compensation and why it's necessary to audit your organization's compensation feedback and performance management structures to address any inequities. Angela, what would you say are some of the dangers of an organization becoming complacent in this area?

Angela Saunders: So, I feel like this goes without saying, but I'm going to go ahead and say it anyway. We never, ever, ever want employers to become complacent with inequity.

From a practical standpoint, just treating employees equitably in compensation and performance management practices, it's just simply the right thing to do. But, also important is that equitable practices can mitigate risk. We're seeing more and more pay equity legislation at both the state and federal levels. And so, it'll be important for the organizations to identify and eliminate those pay inequities as a matter of compliance, but also to avoid litigation. So you have risk mitigation at the forefront there.

In terms of the impact on the bottom line, pay equity engenders loyalty to the employer, along with increased efficiency, creativity and productivity. This is one of those things that's going to be part of your employment brand. When the employment brand reflects an intentionality around pay equity, you can attract the best employees and you can also reduce your turnover.

As it relates to performance management, complacency with inequity can result in diminished employee engagement. You're likely to see turnover, at a minimum, or that employees are disengaged and so, your productivity may decline as a result of that, you'll have lower morale and then it's just difficult for you all to make the right talent management decisions in terms of promotions or pay increases, or things like that, because you're not doing the performance management in a way that is equitable. And then, those relationships are challenged because of perceived biases. Don't be complacent.

Myra Briggs: No, there's no growth in complacency.

And I forgot to put our next question for the audience up, but we'll catch up now. The question that we'd like for you all to respond to is, when is the last time your organization audited their compensation structure? So Atokatha will pop that there and you can respond in the questions pane and then we'll move on to the next part of this process.

So obviously, complacency is not the answer, so we've got to do an audit. Bryan, how would you suggest an organization approach this type of audit?

Bryan W. Jackson: I often say that audits are a gift, and employees are the eyes and the heart of an organization, but audits are the pulse. It provides you with the essential tool to know that you have to act. There's nothing worse than getting some information and doing nothing with it. And so, once you start to get that information, remember that this is an opportunity to learn. And what it does is it takes a bookend of, again, where you started and where you are trying to go. And so, audits are an opportunity to identify gaps and then, mobilize and engage for opportunities.

And, remember, this is not personal. As organizations, you have people that are, again—it's talent. And you want to make sure that you are engaging with them, so that you keep talent, you attract more talent and that as talent leaves, they are only able to share stories of their positive experience based on acting with what was revealed with the audit.

Myra Briggs: Thank you for that, Bryan. And I know we have a broad diversity of participants on the call from small organizations to large. How would you say that an organization would decide—do they have the internal capacity to conduct the audit, or if they potentially need to engage a partner to conduct that audit?

Bryan W. Jackson: Well, I would say it depends on the organization. It depends on a number of things. It depends on your budget. It depends on what you are, what you want to look for. It also depends on what information you are able to receive from HR. A lot of these different aspects of what will be revealed in an audit is going to be dependent upon the number of people that work within the organization. Also, the time, it's so much, but to each its own.

And, again, if budget constraints are a real issue, there are tools that are usable that will not tap into pulling any further resources. And so, just take a deep dive, see what you have the capacity to do.

Also recognize that audits can reveal different things, now you say compensation, but compensation can even be dissected even more. Are we talking about compensation as it relates to women? Are we talking to compensation as it relates to women in their thirties and their forties? Are we talking about compensation as it relates to graduate degrees? It's so much. But, to get a broad view of your organization is at least the first step and that can happen internal, in house, as well.

Myra Briggs: Wonderful. Thank you for that. At the end, you started going expert level on us, but that just goes to show that there are so many nuances to it and things to be considered as we're thinking about all of the different components. So, this is a recurring theme, we're consistently saying, "Don't ask the questions that you're not prepared to do something with the answer."

So, Angela, once we've conducted the audit, tell us what that deliverable stage looks like. Tell us, what do we do with the findings? Once we have age capacity and we've gotten the information, now what do we do with it?

Angela Saunders: OK, so yet again, you have to act.

Employees are leery of employers who collect information and then don't do anything with it, it actually erodes trust. Your failure to act will erode the trust with your employees. And so, once you get the information from these audits, you want to prioritize eliminating pay inequities. Be transparent about publishing pay ranges for each role because that lets people know what they can expect in a particular position. And as we all know, you can't prevent employees from talking about their salaries in the workplace. And so, you probably will and should expect that they're sharing that information, and that can create a whole other dynamic that you may not want to deal with. But if you're publishing those ranges and being transparent, there are no surprises.

As it relates to performance management, you want to develop a performance review process that's equitable for everybody. You want to give substantive comments to support any ratings that you're giving. The employees and the supervisors should partner on establishing their goals, so that there's an understanding of those performance expectations. And very important is that you train your supervisors on how to deliver unbiased performance management throughout the course of the year.

So those are, I think, some of the things that I think that you would do once you learn what your issues are from the audits.

Myra Briggs: Right. So, what I'm hearing is that the audit is just the first step. We've got a whole lot of work to do once the audit is complete, and that audit is really creating sort of the work plan for how you're moving forward, and you really do use the information coming out of that for any manner of things, training, revamping processes and all of that. Thanks so much for that, Angela.

So, Michael, how have you seen some of these inequities that, no matter how hard we try, sometimes we don't do it soon enough. We don't do it often enough. How have you seen some of these inequities affected organizations recruitment strategy?

Michael McElroy: Sure. Well, so one thing Angela just touched on that I want to expand on a little bit is if you as an organization are afraid to post your salary range on your job description, then you have an equity problem with your compensation. It's as simple as that. I probably spend an embarrassing amount of time on Reddit and TikTok these days, and I follow a few different subreddits related to recruiting and the candidate experience, which is a nice pro-tip if you're a recruiter yourself. Gripping about employers not posting a salary range on a job post is absolutely becoming a meme trend. And as we all know, once Generation Z has called something out via meme, it's going to become a cultural expectation pretty soon. So that's happening, so if you're not doing it, you really need to engage with, should you be doing it?

And then, as Bryan said, candidates are paying attention to their total compensation. So, really think about what you have going for you and what you don't have going for you as an organization and brag about what you're great at, what you have going for you and address what you don't. We're all nonprofits, not everyone, but a lot of the organizations on this call are nonprofits. Nonprofits aren't always able to lead the way in terms of monetary compensation, but what else are they able to offer? Their mission focus? So, leaning into why employees choose to work for your organization. Remote work versus in person work? Is that something that's a strength? Is that something that's a weakness when it comes to attracting candidates? Those are some of the thoughts that I have about inequity with the recruiting strategy.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. Thanks so much for that, Michael.

Go ahead, Bryan.

Bryan W. Jackson: To expand upon Michael and so funny, I did this yesterday. Even if, again, you don't have the compensation to be able to do all of these wonderful things, something as small as having a dress-down policy could be the difference between a person being able to come in and be their authentic selves, or not. And so, there's also wellness doors that you can open up and giving people 30 minutes a day, just to surf the internet. We think of these things being very small, but that 30 minutes could be used to go pick up a child or to make a doctor's appointment for a child. These are things that can impact the culture of an organization and it's not based in compensation, it's just based in, I see you as a person and I want you to have the time to be who you are.

Myra Briggs: That's right. And, speaking to what you just mentioned, Bryan, I actually was negotiating a compensation package for a candidate recently. And she said, "I will accept this salary if there is flexibility in the work schedule because then, I don't have to pay for before and after care for my son."

Bryan W. Jackson: There you go.

Myra Briggs: And in thinking about—I'm sure we have parents on the call. And so, in thinking about how much more expensive the 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. hour and the 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. hours are in childcare versus that core 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. hours is probably more significant than anything that this potential employer could have even added to the salary of the prospective candidate. And it didn't cost them anything to make it so that she could take time off early in the morning or in the late in the afternoon and not have to have this added expense of extended care for her child. So that's just an example of how you can create equity within your compensation that's not going to cost you any money.

And again, you don't know if these types of things are affecting or could be valuable to your staff if you don't ask the questions. And the great way to ask the questions are through these types of audits and surveys that will really create an open forum for feedback, so that you know that the benefits structure and the total reward structure that you come up with is really relevant and valuable to the team that you have working for you.

I love how all of this is coming full circle. I'll pause here. Atokatha, do we have answers to our question about compensation structure: When is the last time your organization audited their compensation structure?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: We do, Myra, and the vast majority of people said either yearly or every few years. Most people who put something in said they are actively auditing. There's one that I wanted to share with you, and it is, "We did a study on the market to see where we fell with salary ranges about two years ago. Due to increase an external funding, we were able to give everyone an increase by \$5000 this year."

Myra Briggs: That's fantastic. I'm sure that your staff really appreciated that, not only the exercise of conducting the audit, but the response to the audit is really where the value in that story is, the response. And that's really fantastic. Were there any questions at this point that we can cover before we move on to the next part?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, Myra, there were, especially around the compensation study. One in particular was around just not having one and where does the organization start? One person said, "We're embarrassed to say that we don't have one," but it sounds like they're looking for some information.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. Well, the first place I'm going to go, and I don't want to be trite with my answer, but Nonprofit HR has a fantastic Total Rewards team. And our Total Rewards team, I don't want to say they specialize in compensation studies, because that implies that that's all they do, but they are experts in conducting compensation analyses and studies for the full organization, whether you have three employees or 3,000. Our team stands at the ready to be able to respond and then also help you with setting up a structure for ongoing reviews of your compensation structure. And so, if you wouldn't mind just reaching out to us, we can definitely connect you with our Total Rewards team, who will, at the most immediate step, really be able to hear what your needs are, provide some insight for what an immediate next steps could be, and if it makes sense for everyone, really move forward with actually conducting that analysis.

Another question, Atokatha, or are we ready to move on?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, I think we should move on.

Myra Briggs: OK, perfect. Sounds good. All right, so we've got our final question for the audience ready to go up and the final question that you all will respond to is, what elements will you consider when surveying your staff on their feelings of belonging?

So, we're going to talk a little bit now about essential tips on how to create a culture of belonging that aligns with your commitment to DEI and career campaigns. I'll also let you know that following this set of interaction with our panelists here, we will be moving into our formal Q&A portion of the program. So, if you want to get your questions geared up for anything at all that we've discussed up until this point during the presentation, please go ahead and pop them in the chat. We'll pause after this section to get those questions answered. And we'll use the rest of our time together to do that.

I'll start with you, Sophia. What strategies can an organization use to foster feelings of belonging throughout the career continuum? So that's through the recruitment process and onboarding through 20-year tenure.

Sophia LaFontant: Absolutely. I always like to just first start with what is easiest and most accessible for everyone. Literally, just asking sometimes—without having a follow-up work request—how are you feeling? Or in my words, how are you vibrating? Really just leave your culture to be a space of empathy building and also, when you're having conversation in meetings and just in conversation, removing exclusion vocabulary. Try to be more sensitive and forward-thinking in how you're talking and making sure that everyone knows what words are more culturally sensitive and focused.

And then, I would also recommend, and I know we're talking about what we're supposed to do, but I think it's always important to move away from some things sometimes if you need to. I think we are at a place where people should move away from like cultural potlucks and holiday gatherings as being your only form of gathering together. You're really placing a lot of individuals in a situation of having to either decide, do I want to celebrate something that I don't actually celebrate and recognize, so that I can be this employee who is able to show up and engage? And I don't think that that should be how we make our only form of communication with our colleagues when it comes to non-work-related things.

One thing that I definitely encourage and like to see is focus-driven activities, having an activity that might come along with your mission. Nonprofit HR, clearly, we serve nonprofit organizations, so having a community service event collectively together where everyone is just going out and doing something that is different from our actual workplace is always interesting.

Also, think about having activities that actually take you out of the building. Many times when people have those potlucks or anything that is like, "Oh, we're going to do something around lunch," but if you have a group of individuals that are working and feel like, "OK, well I'm here and I need to be doing this because we're at work. You haven't removed me from the office for two-to-four hours to actually allow me to get a change of pace. You just put something on the calendar for 45 minutes." You haven't really given that person an opportunity to disconnect. And I think it's important to disconnect away from work when we're thinking about how we can foster belonging amongst each other, because you want to get the opportunity to actually get to know your colleagues in a way that feel comfortable for even the introverts and extroverts. Because introverts don't always sit in the office and want to do small talk. There needs to be something that is a focus of mission-driven purpose for an introvert to normally feel comfortable stepping outside of what they're doing.

And then also, we have a lot of organizations that are currently moving towards having affinity groups and I think that that's a really great idea. In these affinity groups you're allowing individuals to get together based on their shared experiences, you can set up any type of structure or rules or policies, not that rules and policies should be how they do everything, but you can set up some guidance around it that says, "Whatever the shared experiences are here are not to be discussed outside of this group." But allowing individuals to have an outlet that is not work related, and I think the key here for belonging is knowing that we do have one collective thing that is bringing us together and that is us working on projects that we might be doing together or things of involving professionalism. But to feel a sense of belonging, sometimes it is important to walk away from the work-driven activity of it and allow people to just be themselves. And then, you will have a culture where individuals are able and feel safe and comfortable to show up as their full self during their professional hours.

Myra Briggs: That's so good, Sophia. I love the ability to, with all of the interactions that we have with different clients—just picking up and developing a sense for what the fullness of diversity is. And you bringing up the introvert versus the extrovert is a diversity that we do not commonly think about. We're always talking about ways to engage in putting each other in one another's faces and talking, and the introverts are like, "Who said I wanted to talk to you?" And, "Who said that I needed to be more involved?" That's just something else that we really need to be thinking about when we're thinking about how people are feeling like they belong. Are we just asking the extroverts how they feel when belonging or do we need to also re-evaluate some of these opportunities and make sure that whether someone considers himself an introvert, extrovert or an ambivert, it's a new one that I heard, that we really do have space for everyone and that everyone does feel like they belong? Thank you so much for those insights.

Now, Michael, what I'd love to do is drive this back toward the recruitment process. What questions are candidates asking about belonging, D, E, I and the B? How is it affecting their decisions to join an organization or not?

Michael McElroy: I'm so glad that's a question because we get asked that all the time as recruiters and interviewers. And so, one thing I would definitely say is, as an organization, make sure that all your hiring managers and interviewers feel prepared to answer this very question, which I'll talk about in a little bit more in a second. It will get asked and having an interviewer saying, "Well, that's not really my thing" or "That's not really my job" is not going to go over well. Your interviewers need to be engaged with your company, your organizational culture, as it relates to DEI and B.

So, in terms of the types of questions that candidates will ask, first of all, they want to know who they're going to be interacting with and who at your organization is going to be invested in them. And they have a variety of ways to ask for this. That's exactly why having diverse leadership is so, so important because most candidates, especially diverse candidates, are looking at your staff page and thinking, who in this organization is going to be my mentor? Who's going to have my back? Who's going to be interested in my development? Who's going to inspire me at this organization? And so, they're going to ask you questions related to that. So, a lot of this really comes down to promoting and hiring diverse staff in your senior leadership level positions, not just at the bottom of your org chart. So that's critically important.

They're also looking at, is there a disconnect between who you say you're hiring and who appears on staff page and in your social media? We've touched a little bit on that, but they're going to be figuring out ways to get that information from you because that's really important to candidates as they're evaluating their job. Also, we should probably—I'll say this. This is a job candidates' market right now. There's a lot of people looking for jobs and especially as more organizations are pivoting to remote work, they have a lot of opportunities out there. So, they're going to have they're going to be evaluating you just like you're evaluating them.

One other point here is, they want to know that what makes them unique won't simply be tolerated by your organization, but it's going to be championed. They're going to really want to think about, what is their experience going to be like once they're working at your organization? And are they going to be valued for whatever traits they have that make them unique and make them an individual?

And then finally, they're going to ask about professional development. And that doesn't just mean, am I going to get promoted quickly? That's not necessarily what—they could mean that a little bit, but that's not just what they're looking at. They're really looking at making sure that staff employees have resources to be able to regularly engage with and improve their cultural competency, and really develop as professionals while employed at your organization. So, those are a lot of the types of questions that you're going to see from candidates.

Myra Briggs: Thank you for that, Michael. Thank you so much. And, Bryan, can you talk a little bit about how you've seen organizations reaffirm their commitment to belonging?

Bryan W. Jackson: Absolutely.

I've seen organizations empower their staff to create internal DEI committees, and they provided them with real power and not just performative tasks. I've also seen organizations consider, and Sophia mentioned this, affinity groups. Affinity groups that staff want to see. I've seen a particular organization have an affinity group for new fathers. This is something that is not often discussed—I started it. It was something at which, we actually had men come in and just engage about their experience with work-life balance and coming home, and not knowing how to be a dad, but knowing that they have 30 emails that they have to send. And it was just a great group.

Engage in “coffee” and, I put air quotes around that, “tea” chats. Not everybody drinks coffee. My mother-in-law is Indian and she loves tea, and that's a way to bring cultures in because if you have a culture that engages with tea more than coffee, that opens up the door, and so you want to acknowledge that.

We've also seen organizations partner with other organizations, and it's just a simple way of just being able to bridge two organizations together to be able to show best practices, to be able to engage with DEI strategies that are working for your organization that could also work within another organization. I've also seen organizations revamp their outward facing public statement to DEI practices and update them with more current language. We've all seen statements that are the flavor of the day and can easily pick those out and so can candidates. Utilize social media, and Michael spoke to this, utilize social media but not just in a way to pander. If the only time I see people of color on your social media is around Indigenous People's Day, I already know, I already know.

Do activities with the individuals that you are on a journey on. And I'm not saying, these are the people that you serve because you don't serve anybody. But the people that you are on a journey with, engage your staff with being able to go out and meet the people because their story becomes a story of the mission driven in why they do what they do.

And just a couple more: Really look at your mentoring and mentee programming. Train the mentors to be mentors. Get that cultural competence in. Allow for them to be able to identify fun ways to engage and review body language as a form of communication and things of that nature because you want to allow for the people within your organization to be able to be authentic, to be vulnerable, so that they can impart what they need into someone that they trust, so that they can improve on the outcomes of work.

And, last but not least, I think this is one of the most important. When you engage with vendors, make sure that they are diverse. Don't continue to go to the same restaurant for the catered lunch. Start to look and see who is out there that represents the population, and provide them with some support and some business as well.

We also have to remember, too, that we are, in many cases, remote and we are going to remain very long or for an extended period of time. So, how do you develop a culture of belonging behind a computer? And some of the ways of being able to do that is essentially some of the things that we're talking about now. When you let the staff know that their lunch is going to be catered to them, delivery style, and they can get whatever they want from wherever they want. That's diversity. That's something you can do that can make someone happy instead of the same Panera Bread sandwiches. Nothing against Panera.

Myra Briggs: I was going to say.

Bryan W. Jackson: But yeah, there are some things that you can do. And if you look at everything that we shared, some of these are free and some of them are a reduced cost that can go a very long way.

Myra Briggs: Thank you for that, Bryan. And Angela, I just want to give you an opportunity to add any tips that you may have for an organization who's just starting this journey. They joined the webinar today, because we recognize that our commitment is just starting, and we're looking for some ideas around how to begin with our journey on belonging.

Angela Saunders: OK. And so, the first step is always going to be, you have to figure out where you are to know where you're going to go. So, evaluate your landscape and see what's actually going on in your organization as it relates to your talent acquisition practices, but also all the other things that we've talked about today.

And as you gather that feedback, you want to use the feedback that you're getting to build a more inclusive environment. If you need to adjust your policies, then do that. If you need to re-imagine some practices that you're doing, then do those things.

And then finally, specific to talent acquisition, you want to think about your approach to talent acquisition and then, design a playbook that has an equity lens to it. So those kinds of things would have a recruitment processes and workflow section; building the talent pipeline and sourcing candidates; and then also, looking for where you can find those diverse candidates as part of that piece of the playbook. Thinking about DEI considerations in the talent acquisition process, things like the blind resume review and things like that. And then, the best practices for the hiring manager, as it relates to recruiting. So that would be things like: How do you put together the interview panel? How are you scoring your candidates? Things like that. So I think that those are probably the best ways to get started on this piece.

Myra Briggs: Thanks so much for that, Angela. So before we wrap up, we've got about 10 minutes here. Atokatha, let's answer some of those questions. And first, let's hear if there were any answers to our question about what elements you would consider for staff on their feelings of belonging, and then let's get those questions answered with the time that we have left.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: OK, you want to switch to that, just one second.

Someone said, "We have a Great Places to Work Annual Survey. They have provided some great resources in terms of how to improve areas of concern. We usually choose three areas as an organization and three areas as a department. By creating focus groups and open discussions, we are able to solicit information directly from employees and get buy-in from uncertain ideas that percolate."

Myra Briggs: Wonderful. Fantastic.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: That was one of the thoughts regarding affinity groups, here's another. "Our organization has affinity groups, we also have cultural book clubs to offer safe and transparent discussion."

There are a few questions in here.

Myra Briggs: OK, you said it or not?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: There are a few questions in here, as well.

One is, can you speak to the connections you have seen between affinity groups and DEI committee groups and how one might create a pipeline and feed into another? Also, when you speak about those groups having power, what has that looked like? Have you seen that done successfully?

Myra Briggs: Bryan, would you like to take the question on the power that you've seen, those affinity groups, how you create it and how you've seen it sort of play out?

Bryan W. Jackson: Absolutely, so I've seen some groups create internal surveys to really get information just about the climate. That's not going to be something that goes against HR. They've also asked questions about ways to be able to be more inclusive and what type of affinity groups they would like to see within the organization.

And with them being created by that committee and being disseminated by the committee and then that information being aggregated by the committee, that was transformative because then, they were spokesmen and women for that group for the larger organization. I've also seen them look at the handbook. I've also seen them engage with, just more recently, an organization that was working with, before Juneteenth became an official federal holiday there was already—they had a document already put forth to make that a holiday for their organization. And so, that's the power that I am talking about, but I've also seen the inverse where it's been, “Find some books that you think that we should be reading once a month. Find a Ted Talk, talk to us about it at the next meeting—oh, we don't have time for the next meeting, so go ahead and email it to us.”

Myra Briggs: Mhmm.

Bryan W. Jackson: That's the worst because then those committed individuals start to then lose trust in the work, but also within the organization.

Myra Briggs: Yeah, that's it. The trust factor is so huge. Atokatha, you mentioned there's one more question?

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Yes, Myra. “I know a best practice can be to remove identifying information on resumes to address bias that can happen. But often, when we are recruiting for diversity, leaving the information on is one of the main ways we can distinguish people of the global majority we want to hire. Do you have any thoughts about this?”

Myra Briggs: So, the first question I would ask is, how are you able to distinguish someone who is a part of the global majority by their resume? And letting you know, upfront, that that already is the wrong way to approach identification. The only way that you can determine whether someone is a part of the global majority or minority is if they self-identify. You can't just look at someone or use clues on a piece of paper to determine that.

So, let's dispel that piece of it first. What we are doing by removing identifiable information or potentially identifiable information is anyone that already has a bias that would come up, based upon a name that they see, or a school that a person has attended, or just the career trajectory, the area of town that they happen to live in and all of the rest of those pieces. Because you really do need to give people an opportunity to self-identify and that is how you can really gauge the health of the diversity of your pipeline. It's only by self-identification. And if a person chooses not to, it's just not information that you have, and you have to move forward.

The other piece of it, though, and someone asked this question earlier, is about how you can re-affirm your commitment to diversity in a position description without actually saying, "We want to hire diverse candidates." And so, I think this entire group can say that we want to dispel the myth that hiring for diversity means hiring Black or brown people. Hiring for diversity means that you end up with a workforce that is representative of the fullness of the Earth.

And so, as you are hiring someone, as you are hiring people, you are looking to make sure that you have broadened the landscape of your recruitment platform to include everyone. We're not trying to create an opposite problem where now White people are not being hired anymore because everyone has moved to a place of only hiring people who identify as what we're considering minorities.

And so, the idea here is for you to create equitable hiring practices so that your hiring practices are based solely in the competencies that are required for the work. If you focus on those competencies, and you cast a broad net, the diversity will happen. Once you identify the commitment to diversity, once you live the principles around hiring and recruiting for diversity, equity and inclusion, and you create the narrative and the employer brand to support it, all of the diversity will happen.

But the problem there is that there's no shortcut to it. You have to actually live it. You have to actually be doing it. You actually have to take the journey in order for those things to happen. I'm going to pause there because I see lots of shaking heads on my screen and I want to make sure everyone else can contribute.

Angela Saunders: I think you absolutely hit the nail on the head. When I was hearing like, by looking at someone's name, I can certainly just marry someone who has a name and take that name. You have no idea who I am and we should never ever get in the habit of identifying people for themselves. They should be self-identifying what diversity they have, what traits that they have.

And I definitely think that using your applicant tracking systems, depending on if you have that, is one way to collect that demographic information that you want. And you can usually align what dimensions of diversity—be it the veteran status, or the age or the race—you can align those things with who the candidates are. And that's going to help you see what your applicant pool will actually look like and help you make those determinations about whether or not you need to pause this recruitment, cast a wider net or if you can keep going because you have enough diversity in your pool.

Michael McElroy: I'd just add on that, beyond applicant tracking tools that may have personally identifiable information and all that, once you get into the hiring process itself, there are so many things that you can do to remove opportunities for bias.

One would be, I've seen organizations where they have the same interviewer kind of escort the candidate through multiple interviews and then, they just frame the entire interview and they're like, "Oh, you're going to love this candidate. Here's X, Y and Z, why don't you tell them?" That's just ripe for opportunities for bias.

Similarly, if you have interviews with just one interviewer, there's so much more opportunity to bring your personal biases into play when you're the only person you have no one to check against, so having interviews with two or three different interviewers in the same interview process.

And then, the last one would be using evaluation forms to ground the interviewer. Grounding that back in, "Here's the competencies that we set out to evaluate our candidates on." So, immediately, during or after the interview, looking at that evaluation form and really evaluating the candidate based on the competencies that you've identified in advance, not just your gut feeling based on the interview.

Myra Briggs: Absolutely. And, we're ready to wrap up here, and thank you all so much for your time today. There was one final question that was submitted ahead of time that I just want to take ten seconds to address. The question was, is the lack of diverse qualified candidates a myth or reality?

And I want to tell you, and I can speak for all five of us on this call, we do not need to do a round robin. It is 100% a myth. The only thing that diverse candidates are lacking is opportunity and that's the last thing that I think I want to leave you all with. Thank you all so much for spending time with us today. Atokatha, I'll kick it back off to you to wrap us up.

Atokatha Ashmond Brew: Thank you so much, Myra. That's all the time we have for Q&A. Thank you to our entire panelist. We hope you found the information shared today valuable.

You may look forward to receiving the recording to this webinar and also slides in the coming days. There are many more webinars coming up in 2021. Feel free to visit nonprofithr.com/events to see those webinars and register.

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