

PeterD's Preparation Notes for
Leadership Panel
IBM Executive Lunch III
October 11, 2018
2:30 pm -3:30 pm PDT

- **Why are diverse and inclusive teams good for business?**
 - Short answer: **due consideration of diverse input efficiently leads to better results sooner.**
 - Supporting logic:
 - No one, not even the best leaders, can do much alone. Good leaders are open to input.
 - **Better outcomes** result from **more input** from **more sources.**
 - The best leaders **aggressively seek and institutionalize ways to get diverse input.**
- **Tell us how you have made the business case for diversity and inclusion in your organizations?**
 - I helped grow a company from nothing to 10,000 people and \$1+B over 20-years.
 - We routinely grew at 20+%/year which meant we needed to hire 1/3 of the firm every year (accounting to also replace attrition); essentially, we had to hire the whole firm every three years.
 - We unwittingly got very good at finding, hiring, and grooming people like ourselves which led to two problems:
 - We became insular in that most of us thought and acted in similar ways which manifests as “group think” where we weren’t getting push-back and new ideas from different ways of thinking.
 - There were only so many people like ourselves to find and hire. I.e., we **had** to pursue diverse populations in order to fuel growth.



- How do you measure the return on investment?
 - The constraint to growth of a highly successful organization is almost always **how fast and how well you can find, hire, develop, and deploy top people** because the need is great, but demand is high and supply is limited.
 - Simple logic shows that you can **grow faster and more efficiently by expanding the pool of people you draw upon and develop**. It is not easy or inexpensive because you need to learn to do things differently but it's worth it.
 - The return on investment is that **aggressively getting good at seeking and attracting, developing, and deploying a diverse talent pool enables growth by solving the top talent constraint**.

- **What strategies do you see as key for developing innovative diverse teams?**
 - Think of developing diverse teams and being inclusive as a **key way to get a strategic advantage**. Invest in it, when it works (and it will) do it some more. If it doesn't, step back and try again.
 - Find and **learn from others** who have been successful.
 - Manage it as a **strategic initiative** with a **plan, a budget, a governance structure, a leader and a team of resources assigned to drive the effort and to be accountable** to top management for progress.
 - Know that **if you don't figure out how to do it well, others will and they'll eat your lunch**.

- **So far, we've been talking about good leadership and talent development that works for both women and men. At the same time research suggests that, given the current environment, women can face different challenges in the workplace — challenges that can make it more difficult to access stretch opportunities, networks, resources etc. In your view, what are some of these systemic challenges and/or what**



role can male advocates and managers play in addressing these challenges?

- One of my top graduate students ([Ms. Melissa George Kessler](#)) is an accomplished executive in the grain industry who observes that:

“women reach the beginning of ‘mid-career’ at a time when they have a lot of other life pressure, making the biggest challenge deciding: ***what do you want?***”

- She goes on to say:

“I have seen women effectively advocate for themselves and their growth **IF they are clear about what they want**. If not, then no one can be clear, and no one can champion them. From a mentorship perspective, **helping a woman decide what path she wants to pursue or even THINKS she wants to pursue - including explicit conversation but also exposing her to a range of options** (because many of us didn't have mothers with big careers) - is really valuable.”

- **What has helped you be a more effective advocate, or what advice would you have for others who want to advocate?**
 - Learning how to get into the shoes of others
 - Professional executive coaching including psychometric assessments, diversity training, learning that people come at the world differently and that different perspectives are to be expected, understood, and appreciated.
 - Training in Organization Development at executive and masters programs
 - Human interaction lab (e.g., [as offered by NTL](#))
 - Hiring a PhD OD professional on my team to help me model inclusive behavior and to teach, monitor, and feedback relative to targeted behaviors of my teams.
- **What do we need to do to inspire more male advocates, to move things forward and accelerate change?**
 - Draw attention to, and promote, the success of those who model targeted behavior.



- Improve and roll out training in OD skills, methods, and approaches and in the application of behavioral theory (as with my course [Strategic Leadership Immersion Program](#)).
- **Can you share examples and specific ways that you have advocated for diversity and inclusion?**
 - Formed, staffed, and supported Inclusive leadership committees in organizations I run
 - Personally hired and groomed dozens of strong professionals from diverse populations in key roles
 - Searched for, found, brought in and paid for coaching and training to support professional executive development
 - Encouraged community learning/sharing
- **How have you worked with other men or how you talk to other men about these issues?**
 - Explained and talked through the logic of it one-on-one and in management meetings to get everyone to understand and on-board
 - Gave feedback of plus and minus behaviors when noticed
 - Asked executives and their staffs (e.g., recruiting personnel) to take more time and do it right rather than taking the easy/fast/cheap way out...it takes real effort, time, and expense to do different things to get a different result
- **Can you share any observations on the ability to have an inclusive team or organization?**
 - Motivation and ability comes from and starts at the top. The topmost leaders cannot delegate the initiative. The leader must declare, exhibit, promote, and support the evolution to an inclusive way of being and working.
- **What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?**
 - Be very good at what you do.
 - Be clear about what you seek
 - No one succeeds alone: build a team aligned with what you want to do (see below)



- **What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?**
 - Most people are not open to input. They think they are supposed to be able to do what they are doing on their own and that it is a weakness to get help. The truth is that the strongest leaders get good at getting help. Leadership success is a team-sport.

- **We all know the importance of networking and the role of mentors. Can you provide us with personal tips on how to cultivate mentors and sponsor relationships?**
 - Identify three strong people you want to be like and work extensively with each of them in turn. Take the best from each to internalize and consolidate in yourself to become the best possible blend of what you've learned. This is as opposed to becoming a weak version of just one of the three.

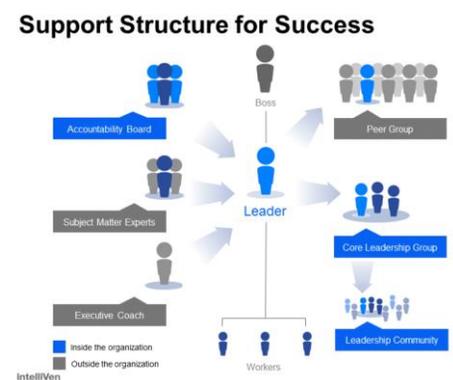
 - Attract the interest of those you want to be like (to do as described above) by finding out what is important to them and then helping them do what they are trying to do. It will then be in their own interest to help you...because you are helping them.

- **What are the top two growth inhibitors you have encountered in your career?**
 - Thinking you must succeed on your own
 - Not being open to input
 - Drinking your own Kool Aid

- **Give us your recommendations or best practices for next leaders taking on a new assignment and leadership position?**
 - Do a great job at whatever you do.

 - Get clear about what you seek to accomplish and why

 - Surround yourself with key people in key roles to form a support structure as described in the [GET HELP](#) section of my book [Manage to Lead: Seven Truths to Help You Change the World](#):
 - Someone(s) to be accountable to



- Build a team of diverse depths who want to deploy their great strengths towards the same ends
 - Meet regularly with a highly trained personal effectiveness coach
 - Tap-in to those who have succeeded in the past doing what you are doing now to learn everything you can from them about how to be successful at what you are doing
 - Commune regularly with a group of people trying to do something similar to what you are doing (in a non-competitive realm) to learn from each other's experiences and for unconditional support to your individual efforts
 - Join and actively participate in a learning community of like interests
- Work hard. Do well. Learn from what works and what doesn't. Adjust. And try again.
 - Repeat with diligence (i.e., DON'T GIVE UP!) until your goal is accomplished!

