

# Diversity & Inclusion

## 20 Lessons from the Trenches

We've been in the trenches working with large organisations around the world for over 12 years now, so we have some street cred to make some observations about what works and what doesn't. We have decided to put together our lessons from the trenches in the hope that some of this may assist organisations who are trying to make an impact – can use this advice to sharpen their pencils and accelerate their journeys.



### Street cred

- So, what has 'being in the trenches' involved?
- Speaking to over 10,000 leaders from CEO's to supervisors, from the boardroom to the dragline!
  - Pioneering the first global critical mass program for men in middle management to successfully test our hypothesis that good decent men really wanted to help women with their careers – but sometimes they didn't know how.
  - Supporting and assisting with the establishment of the Male Champions of Change, including convening a group in Queensland.
  - Mentoring over 32,000 women
  - Hosting the 10,000 Women in Tech Asia Pac virtual conference
  - Playing a pivotal role in supporting two major organisations to win global Catalyst Awards



### What works

It's been challenging and rewarding and we have learned A LOT! We know the ingredients of success and we know when the advice needs to be: "don't do anything as 'dabbling' can set you backwards" – yes, we reknowned for being blunt, because we are obsessed with helping organisations achieve a RESULT.

It's the trend for leaders to shout from the roof tops about how supportive they are of diversity and inclusion. And yet the results are pitiful. Why? Being inclusive of someone who is different to you is really hard. Managing someone who's different is even harder.

It's a whole new skillset to genuinely be able to manage difference. It's not what we are used to. You don't know what to do. The leaders who are singing about diversity and inclusion from the pulpit generally have not taken the time to really learn these new skills. It's about changing the habits of leadership – and changing any habit is hard. It takes practice, repetition and bloody minded persistence.



### Maureen Frank

Join us to learn our 20 lessons from the trenches, delivered by our Chief Disruption Officer, Maureen Frank. Maureen is a best selling author, former Head of Mergers and Acquisitions at Aon, Telstra Business Woman of the Year, BRW Rising Star and speaker at conferences around the world. Most of all, Maureen is skilled at rolling her sleeves up and getting to the real heart of the issue, delivering FRANK and evidenced based advice with an ROI, business focus – but with a simple practical approach.

# Diversity and inclusion LESSONS LEARNED

1. Organisations follow each other without proper assessment of ROI of initiatives
2. Employee resource groups and segregated 'special group' approaches alienate people and have questionable return
3. Measurement, focus and general understanding of the subject is centred on the 'diversity' component. People struggle to decouple the 'inclusion' component.
4. A strategy built around an 'inclusive culture' has a much bigger business case, ticks multiple items in the people strategy – and gains more buy in.
5. Most leaders think they are very inclusive and you need to take them on a journey to understand what that means and where they may have shortfalls.
6. 'D&I' is a popular topic, most leaders can talk a good game – but the demonstrated commitment is poor. There is a lot of talking the talk without walking the walk.
7. Organisations that 'dabble' are wasting their time and money. The employees of such organisations smell inauthenticity a mile away.
8. Diversity Councils comprised of employee representatives from throughout the business are a waste of time.
9. The CEO and the senior leadership MUST all be singing from the same hymn sheet in order to succeed at an organization.
10. Middle management do not understand diversity and inclusion and feel threatened by it in some instances. It needs to be explained properly at this level. There is an assumption of understanding of the business case.
11. Creating 'awareness' can make things worse. There is limited value in awareness alone.
12. Resistance to diversity and inclusion is just below the surface and it doesn't take much to uncover some real hostility.
13. In order to get real results and create sustainable change – you must follow the principles of cultural change.
14. There is a lot of 'happy talk' around D&I achievements and defensiveness. The message is 'we are doing a great job' and insufficient vulnerability demonstrated of the reality in most instances.
15. Leaders WANT to be inclusive but don't know HOW. Leaders feel that they cannot be honest in seeking help – they are supposed to be good at being inclusive. When leaders accept that this is a whole new way to lead and it's OK to be a beginner – that's when they start to make progress.
16. Leading inclusively and managing difference is HARD – shifting behaviour requires a 'habit shift' approach to adult learning.
17. Organisations need to focus on and measure inclusion – most strategies only measure 'diversity' – because that is easier to do. The fundamental leadership habit shift required for increasing inclusion requires massive individual effort and real accountability.
18. Passion is not enough. 'Getting' diversity and inclusion requires dedication and learning how to manage difference – which is a new skillset.
19. If you broaden the agenda to be around 'culture' and look at the bigger size of the prize – you get way more traction than it becomes a real priority not just a 'lip service' priority.
20. Senior leaders need guidance and support on the 'micro' practical day to day application of inclusion – telling them to 'be inclusive' doesn't work.