

# WHAT MAJORITY MEN REALLY THINK ABOUT D&I

And How to Engage Them in It

BELONGING SERIES | PART 2

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## FOREWORD

The report you're about to read is all about "majority men"—majority race, gender, and sexual orientation. Like almost everyone, I came up in my career surrounded by just such men. They were my bosses, my peers, and eventually, my reports. Some have become lifelong friends and confidantes, and some now wield great power at companies. Many have championed diversity and inclusion, but as we all know, the corporate sector hasn't been able to make the progress we hoped. Now, in the midst of a global pandemic and massive social justice movement, shareholders, consumers, and employees are demanding serious, structural overhaul.

As the price of saying or doing the wrong thing gets steeper, and the opportunity of getting this right grows, friends and former colleagues alike are coming to me and asking: *What do I do?*

I tell them: Make this a strategic priority. While racial inequity may be newer to you, you know how to lead. Think of the times you have succeeded in taking over a new business unit. In this work, you can apply the same leadership approach. You can use the same skills.

**Be confident.** Executives operate from a position of strength or a position of weakness. If you believe in your abilities and in yourself, you won't feel threatened by diversity. Instead, you will see this moment as an opportunity to grow, innovate, and lead the corporate space and our larger society into a new era of human rights.

**Be vulnerable.** Confidence does not mean arrogance. When it comes to social justice, few corporate leaders are experts. Speak from your personal perspective and say to employees: "I don't know it all, but I'm committed to learning, and I want you to tell me when I make a mistake." This means being willing to call yourself out, too—which you undoubtedly will. This can be uncomfortable, but we handle discomfort in tough business situations regularly. Build trust with those around you, and take what they tell you to heart.

**Be curious.** Continually invite and incorporate diverse perspectives. Commit to self-reflection and education on the tough topics of racism, sexism, ableism, and beyond that affect members of your workplace.

**Plus: Be patient and persistent.** For many leaders, this is a new skill; we are wired to set a plan in motion and deliver—fast. But building cultures of belonging will not happen in a quarter, or even a year. This work requires a long-term commitment to change. Make clear that inclusive leadership is a "must-have" to advance at your company. Then, set intermediate objectives to keep yourself, and your teams, inspired.

This report gives me renewed hope. As you'll see, more than two in five majority men see great value in D&I. We call this group "True Believers." Happily, True Believers score high on belonging at work, which correlates to engagement and loyalty. That's great news—and it's great for business.

We can make change happen, but we've got to get to work and *lead*.

Sincerely,



Pat Fili-Krushel  
Chief Executive Officer, Center for Talent innovation

## METHODOLOGY

The research consists of a survey; in-person focus groups and *Insights In-Depth*<sup>®</sup> sessions (a proprietary web-based tool used to conduct voice-facilitated virtual focus groups) with over five hundred participants; and one-on-one interviews with more than 40 people. The national survey was conducted online and over the phone in February 2020 among 3,711 respondents (2,096 men, 1,593 women, 18 who identify as something else, and 4 who did not identify their gender). Respondents were between the ages of 21 and 65 and employed full time in white-collar professions, with at least a bachelor's degree. Data was weighted to be representative of the US population on key demographics (age, sex, education, race/ethnicity, and census division). The base used for statistical testing was the effective base. This survey was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the auspices of the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI), a nonprofit research organization. NORC was responsible for the data collection, while CTI conducted the analysis. In the charts, percentages may not always add up to 100 because of computer rounding or the acceptance of multiple responses from survey participants. Throughout this report, "Latinx" refers to those who identify as being of Latino or Hispanic descent.

# INTRODUCTION

At the writing of this report, we stand at an inflection point. A global pandemic fuels an economic downturn, while exposing inequities in healthcare delivery, employment, childcare norms, and beyond.<sup>1</sup> On COVID-19's heels, an uprising against systemic racism catalyzes long-overdue dialogue about racial injustice and deepens profound political divisions.

For many, through both steady times and times of crisis, work can be a haven: a source of purpose, income, routine, and a community of individuals working toward a common goal. With the recent reckoning on race, the expectations of communities are shifting in all spheres of life. Work is no haven from systemic inequity.

Bold companies and leaders recognize, and seek to dismantle, the inequities that persist in the professional workplace. To do so, they must create communities where everyone, regardless of their background, belongs.

But belonging for all, which we defined and gave guidance on in *The Power of Belonging*,<sup>2</sup> requires that men who are in the majority at work (majority race, gender, and sexual orientation) embrace and drive diversity and inclusion (D&I).

*"My workplace is far more diverse than my neighborhood, so my best opportunity to interact with a broad community of people is through work."*

White man in mid-management

After all, change cannot happen without the support of these men. The authors of the 2013 White Men's Leadership Study, one of the first investigations into the role of White men in D&I, wrote: "No business strategy, including global diversity and inclusion, can deliver optimal results if a significant portion of those with position power disconnect from that strategy."<sup>3</sup> In many organizations, top leaders with "position power" are majority men. White men make up approximately 27% of college graduates, but within a sample of Fortune 500 companies, hold fully 72% of corporate leadership roles.<sup>4</sup>

Engaging majority men in D&I will be no easy feat. It will require this cohort, who hold vast and deep power in organizations, to build new habits. They can no longer rely on common schools or neighborhoods to build community with others. They have to practice partnership, speak out against bias, and see the upside in building diverse, inclusive workplaces.

The work is starting. On a national scale, conversations on Whiteness, "White fragility," and anti-racism—once relegated to niches of researchers, community organizers, and D&I offices—are fully mainstream.<sup>5</sup>

And the imperative could not be clearer. A ripple of executive resignations and negative press in the summer of 2020 demonstrates the risks of getting this wrong: CrossFit, Starbucks, and Bon Appétit are just a few of the major brands paying the penalty for entrenched cultures of bias, the words or deeds of individual leaders, or poorly calculated responses to the uprising against systemic racism.<sup>6</sup>

*"We have to be curious about what others want, rather than assume they want what we want. If I assume that, as a member of the majority group, then I'm just creating pressure for others to assimilate into the dominant culture."*

Michael Welp, PhD, Co-founder, White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP|FDPGlobal)

The threat of being publicly shamed is understandably frightening to majority men, leading them to disengage or stay silent. It feels safer. We saw this in response to the #MeToo movement, when instead of leaning into discomfort and partnering to create meaningful change, some men began to avoid female coworkers.<sup>7</sup> This tendency is exacerbated by the fact that men are often socialized to distance themselves from their emotions.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, as we'll explore in this second installment of our four-part series on belonging at work, bringing majority men into the D&I fold requires hard work for employer and employee alike. It asks that majority men see themselves as individuals positioned in a specific race and culture—one that has long set the standard for workplace culture. (White women, too, benefit from Whiteness and have a unique role to play, but we believe merit their own nuanced discussion and research.) In particular, White male culture has been cast as “so pervasive it’s often invisible, even to those who rarely if ever have to leave it...Like fish unaware of water, most white men respond, ‘What culture?’ when the topic is raised.”<sup>9</sup> With that awareness, majority men can better question calcified norms, centralize D&I as a core operating imperative, and dismantle affinity bias or assimilation as the primary paths to belonging.

Fortunately, we find, majority men who embrace the ethos of D&I stand to gain ample career benefits—and a boost in their own sense of belonging at work. To put it plainly: to build belonging for underrepresented groups, majority men must be involved in D&I. And by engaging in D&I, they can boost their own belonging.

Consider this report a guide to majority men in today’s workplace. We’ll map their belonging, reveal their unvarnished views of D&I, and explore how to convert passive supporters into fully active partners: those who use their power to provide a platform, speaking up about both the personal and universal importance of an equitable workplace where *all* belong.

*“In this work, people can fight about what core issue and identity is most important, who is suffering the most. While it is important to recognize that groups are situated asymmetrically, it is also important to recognize that all groups have stories, aspirations, and suffering. The belonging framework is something we all have a piece of, and allows all groups to engage.”*

Prof. John A. Powell, Haas Chancellor’s Chair in Equity and Inclusion, Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley

# SECTION I: MEASURING BELONGING FOR MAJORITY MEN

Where do majority men fit in an increasingly diverse workforce? In this section, we'll share belonging scores for majority men at work and consider how they compare to belonging for non-majority men.

## REVISITING THE ELEMENTS OF BELONGING

Decades of research into belonging in families, schools, and other communities show that as humans, we're hardwired to seek out belonging, which is rooted in feelings of trust and psychological safety.<sup>10</sup> Yet there hasn't been as much research regarding belonging at work. As workplaces diversify, employees often fall back on the instinct to "bond" through similarities rather than "bridge" across differences, which means belonging is less available to some.<sup>11</sup> To intentionally create belonging in the workplace *across* lines of difference, this theoretical concept must be made transparent, concrete, and measurable. To do so, the Center for Talent Innovation (CTI) has developed a 24-item scale, tailored from existing belonging measures to fit the workplace.<sup>12</sup> We then grouped those items into four elements of belonging:



**When you are seen** at work, you are recognized, rewarded, and respected by your colleagues. You have psychological safety—you can speak up with little risk, and speak from your unique perspective.



**When you are connected** at work, you have positive, authentic social interactions with peers, managers, and senior leaders. You find the sweet spot of "optimal distinctiveness," coined by social psychologist Marilynn Brewer: you don't need to assimilate, but you don't stand out as "other."<sup>13</sup>



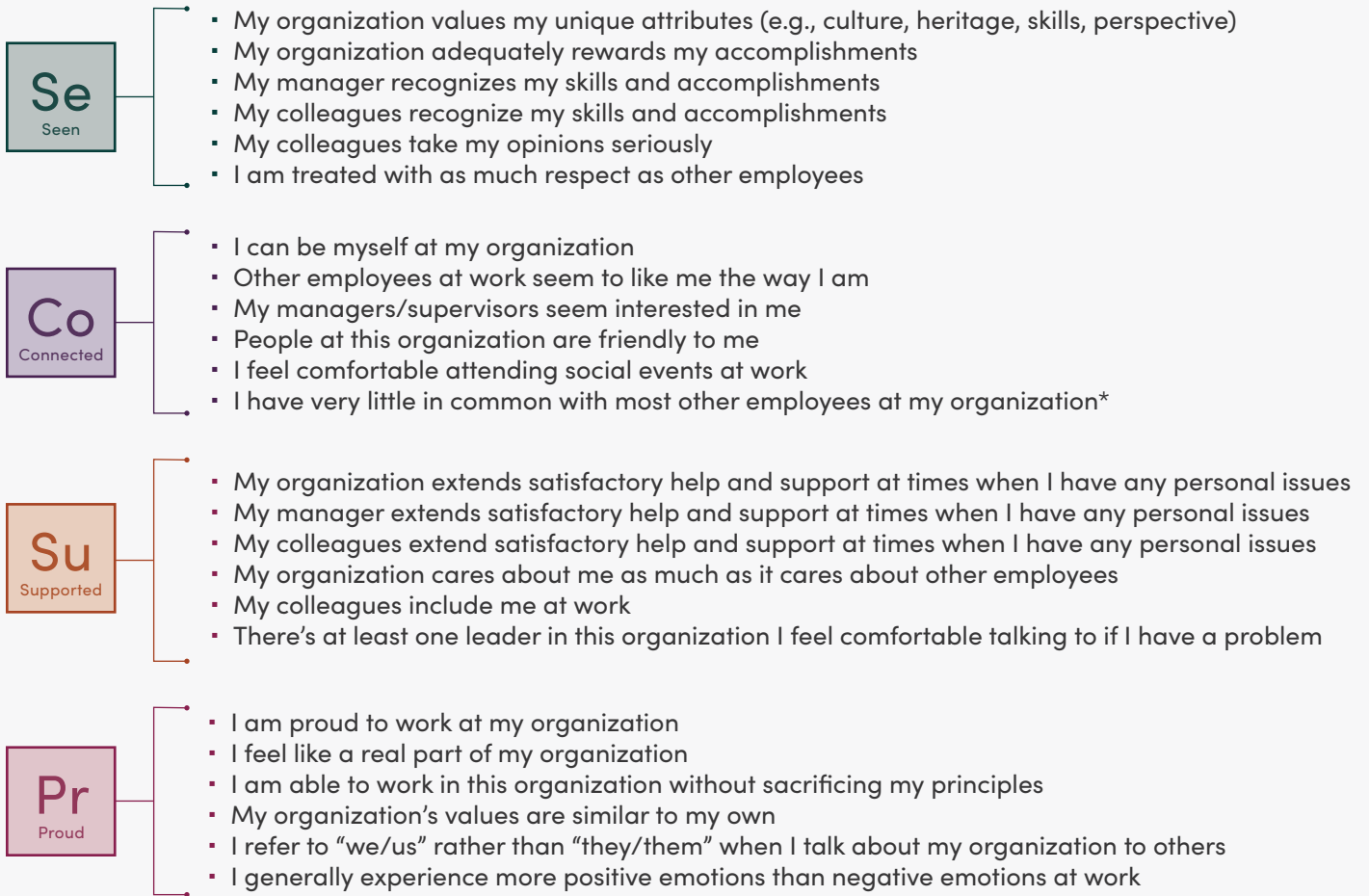
**When you are supported** at work, those around you—from your peers to senior leaders—give you what you need to get your work done and live a full life.



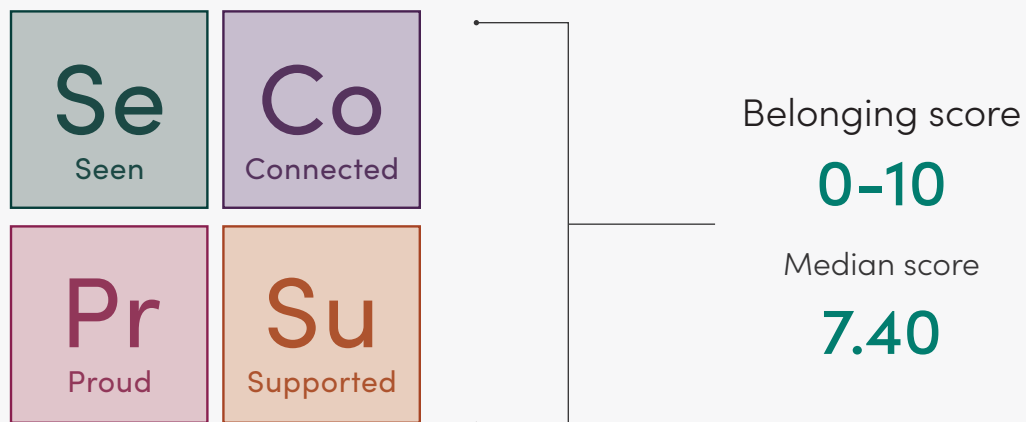
**When you are proud** of your work and your organization, you feel aligned with its purpose, vision, and values. You're not a "cog in the machine," but a vital member of the team. You relish the chance to tell people what you do and where you work.

**In sum, belonging at work means you feel seen for your unique contributions; connected to your coworkers; supported in your daily work and career development; and proud of your organization's values and purpose.**

To score a ten on our ten-point belonging scale, you strongly agree with each component of these four elements. In other words, in your day-to-day at work, you feel fully seen, connected, supported, and proud.



\*Responses to this scale item were reverse-scored



*"You feel like you belong if you have three things: autonomy, some control over the way you work and way you express ideas; mastery, including the resources to hone your craft; and purpose, clearly defined goals from the top and personal goals as a subset of that."*

White male Millennial

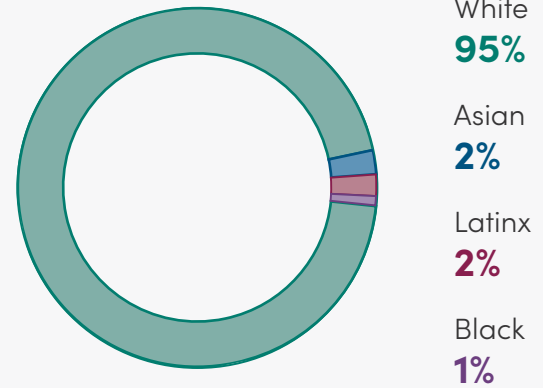


# WHO IS A “MAJORITY” MAN?

Majority men,<sup>14</sup> as we define them, include:

- White men who are straight and are cisgender (or “cis”), meaning their gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth. This group makes up 95% of majority men.
- Cisgender straight men who are *not* White, but who work mostly with people of their race/ethnicity. In the tech industry, for example, it’s not uncommon for South Asian men to make up the majority of a given team or department. In our study, this 5% of majority men represents those who are in the minority in the US but in the “majority” race/ethnicity of most people around them at work.

Majority men who are:



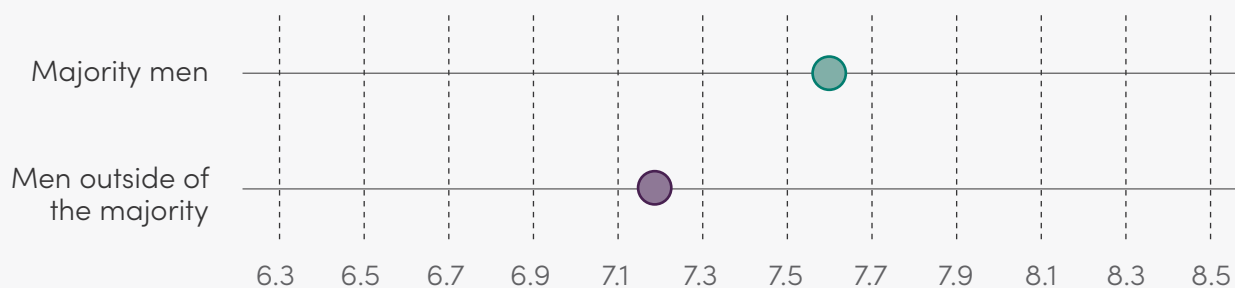
# HOW MEN SCORE ON BELONGING

The vision of belonging we’ve defined and measured is an inclusive one. Rather than rely on shortcuts to belonging through affinities like gender, race, or educational background, we’ve uncovered something that can be built intentionally across lines of difference.

However, because of their majority status, majority men still have shortcuts to belonging available to them. Their belonging scores reflect it. At 7.60, majority men score quite a bit higher than men outside of the majority, who have a median score of 7.19.

Though these shifts may seem small, they correspond to remarkable boosts in outcomes for employees and employers.<sup>15</sup> Consider this: an employee with a belonging score above 8.54 is 80% more likely to be very engaged than an employee with a score of 6.25 or below. As belonging scores go up, so do employees’ likelihood to say they are loyal, to say they plan to stay at their companies for more than two years, and to recommend their employers to others. They are less likely to feel stalled as they build their careers. A little belonging goes a long way—and majority men have more of it.

Median belonging scores for men

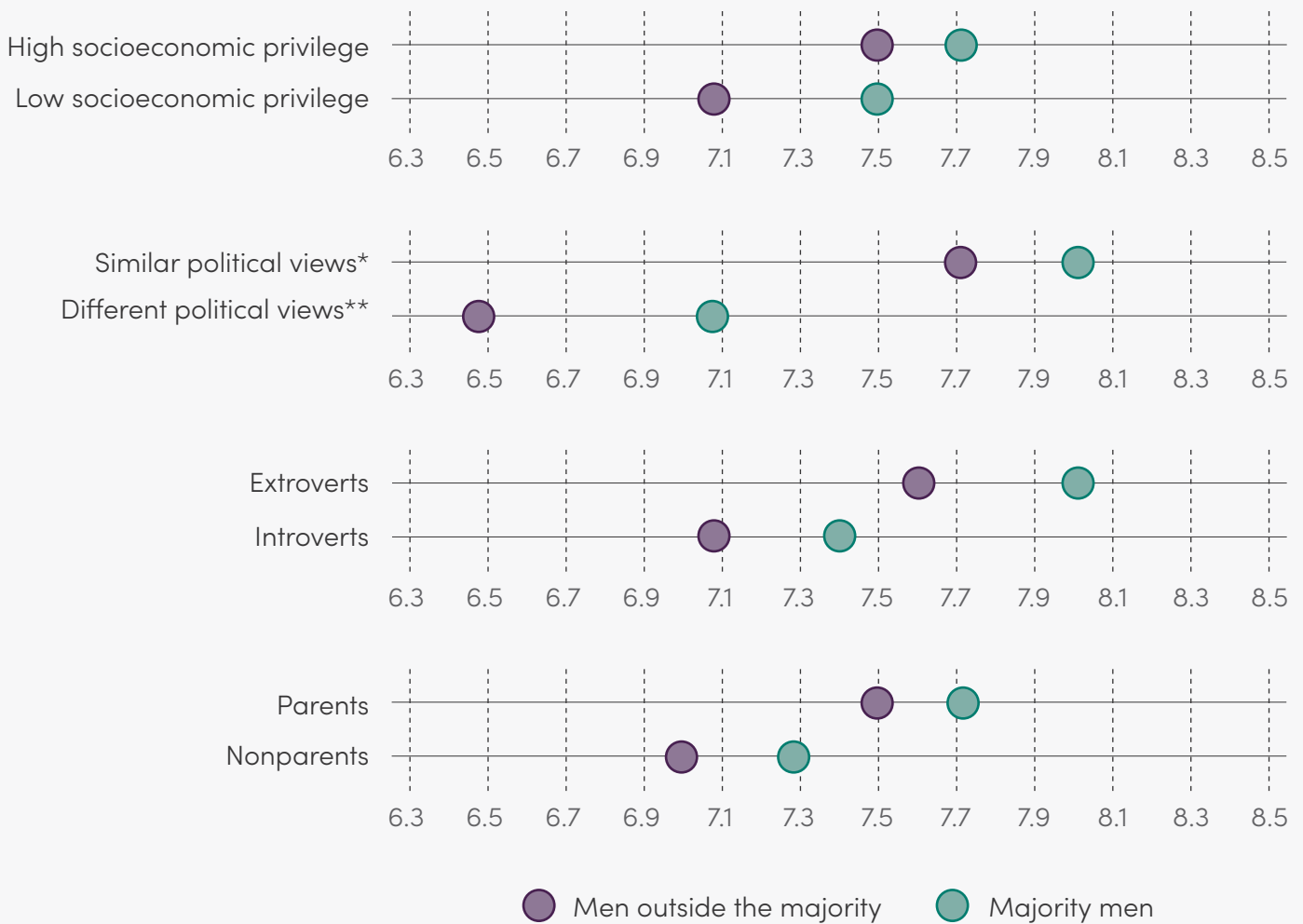


# MAJORITY MEN ARE NOT MONOLITHIC

Majority men are not all the same. Certain lived experiences and identity traits dampen belonging for majority men. In fact, helping White men in particular see their own unique culture and the nuances within it is critical to fostering partnership across difference.<sup>16</sup> Being introverted, not having children, and holding political views that differ from many of those around you can be particularly alienating.

However, while the “othering” that majority men experience is real and can be painful, a comparison of belonging scores demonstrates that being in the majority shields them from the impact felt by members of underrepresented groups.

Median belonging scores for men



\*Professionals who share political views with most of their colleagues

\*\*Professionals who do not share political views with most of their colleagues

*“In promotion practices, prioritizing performance in a vacuum eliminates contextual factors. To become a high-performer as an affluent White male, all I ever had to do was my schoolwork. I never had to worry about food, never been in debt. It’s easy to perform when all your external factors are tailwinds.”*

White male Millennial

Consider socioeconomic background. Majority men who grew up with low socioeconomic status, we find, have the same median belonging score as non-majority men who grew up with *high* socioeconomic status. This finding echoes Harvard economist Raj Chetty and colleagues' finding that the "American Dream" eludes Black men, who consistently earn less than White men, regardless of being raised rich or poor.<sup>17</sup>

Understanding belonging scores gives context for those looking to engage majority men. While they do face adversity, and that can give them empathy for other groups that are frequently excluded at work, majority men's higher belonging scores validate they are at an advantage.

*"It's important to know that leaders care about the work that you're doing, and acknowledge that you're doing quality work."*

White male Millennial

*"To me, belonging at work means I am comfortable, as one hundred percent myself, doing the job that is asked of me. And making no apologies for it."*

White male Gen Xer

*"If you're a successful White male, until you dip into this world, you assume everyone else gets a fair shake. Even if you grow up and work in liberal spaces, you just assume meritocracy—you assume the cream will rise, just like your experience. So the single biggest epiphany to me was that that's not true!"*

Kent Gardiner, Former Chair, Crowell & Moring LLP

*"I've had some difficulties to overcome in my life, but I'm a White man. With some of the things that happened in my past, I probably wouldn't be here if I had a different color skin, and I'm aware of that."*

White male Gen Xer

## MEASURING SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Researchers often use household income as a proxy to determine a subject's socioeconomic background. But that approach discounts the psychological impact our upbringing has on this—if your parents didn't have friends who could give you professional opportunities, for example, you grew up with a different set of constraints. As a professional, your socioeconomic privilege—or lack thereof—impacts how you connect with, and react to, your colleagues.<sup>18</sup> Even if you're White and male.

In order to test that hypothesis, we developed a 15-question metric rooted in psychological scholarship to replace "household income" as a measure of socioeconomic background.<sup>19</sup> And, indeed, we find that those who were raised with socioeconomic privilege have higher belonging scores.

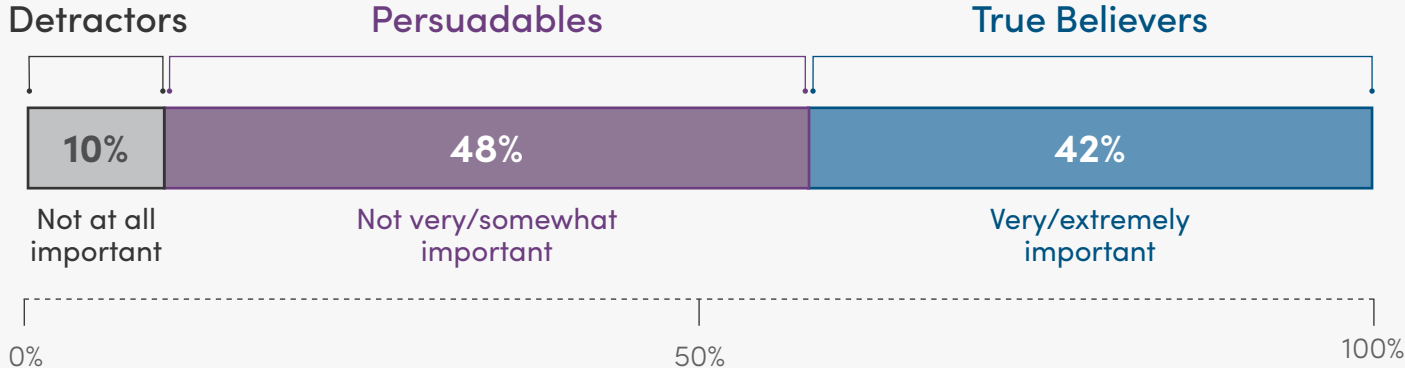
# SECTION II: PROFILES OF MAJORITY MEN

To engage majority men in D&I and build belonging for all, we first need to understand where they stand today. The good news: not many majority men are disillusioned when it comes to D&I. The bad news: even those who think D&I is very important could do far more to promote it. When we better understand, we can build a plan to move majority men toward a fourth, aspirational archetype: Partners, who strongly support D&I and act according to this belief.

## THREE ARCHETYPES

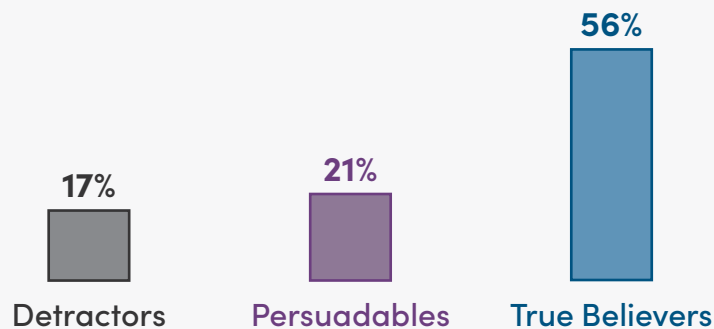
To engage majority men, it's important to understand their attitudes toward D&I, and how those attitudes correlate to different backgrounds and behaviors. We grouped majority men into three archetypes. Detractors think D&I has no importance at work. True Believers think D&I is very important—and, unsurprisingly, are the most likely of the three to get involved in D&I efforts. Persuadables sit somewhere in between.

Majority men's responses to: How important is D&I to you at work?



Only 10% of majority men are Detractors. Nearly half of them (48%) are Persuadables. And more than two in five (42%) are True Believers. Two traits we explored—socioeconomic background and parenthood—were somewhat evenly distributed across these groups. In other words, Detractors are not significantly more likely to be fathers, or to come from humble beginnings than True Believers. Beyond the similarities, marked distinctions exist among these archetypes. When it comes to generation (Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; Gen Xers, born between 1965 and 1981; and Millennials, born between 1982 and 2000) and social style (extroversion and introversion), differences emerge. Let's take a closer look.

### Majority men who have gotten involved in their companies' D&I efforts



*"I think the 'what' of D&I is very popular, particularly when the conversation is positive, but I think it's the questions around 'how' and 'what if things go wrong' that are difficult."*

White man in mid-management

*"When people are resistant, it's usually because there's a need that's not being met—they're not feeling included or they feel like they're going to be under attack or assault. People don't want to support others if they don't feel supported."*

Joel A. Brown, Chief Visionary Officer, Pneumos

*"For people who believe D&I is somewhat important to them, or they're not sure of the importance, we must continue to have the conversation. Make it part of every conversation. We need to make it cultural."*

Michael Bracken, Sector Vice President, Engineering and Sciences, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems

# PART I: PROFILE OF A DETRACTOR

Talent specialists worry most about Detractors, who don't think D&I is important—at all. Interestingly, many Detractors themselves feel like outsiders at work.

Detractors have a median belonging score of 6.98, well below the median for majority men overall. They are struggling to find belonging at their organizations, so it's no wonder that they feel disenfranchised, and in some cases angered, by the D&I conversation. In focus groups, we heard from men who said that they'd been passed up for promotion; that their voice was silenced; that their political views weren't accepted. They saw programs that support others' equity as a threat or unfair advantage.

### Attitudes that are more common among Detractors than among other majority men

"Diversity and inclusion efforts benefit some groups at the expense of others"

"Focusing on difference is divisive"

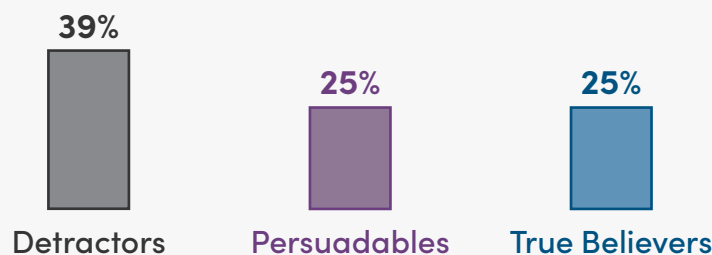
"Everyone who works hard has an equal chance of success"

"People should earn mentorship or sponsorship based on their past performance, and not based on their race or gender"

Detractors are more likely than other majority men to believe that all could succeed if they could just "pull themselves up by the bootstraps." This myth of the meritocracy has deep roots in the American Dream, perpetuated by the belief that hard work translates to equivalent success—and Detractors are the most likely of all majority men to believe that "everyone who works hard has an equal chance of success" and that "focusing on difference is divisive."<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, nearly two in five (39%) Detractors do *not* share political views with most of their colleagues. As politics grow increasingly polarized, political views are part of one's identity.<sup>21</sup> Not sharing political views with the majority of those around you, then, can be a potential source of conflict, and profoundly alienating. In interviews, we heard men who don't share political views with colleagues talk about the frustrations of needing to keep their mouth shut to fit in.

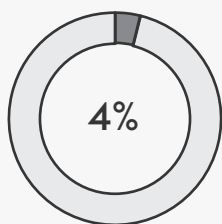
### Majority men whose political views differ from most of their colleagues' views



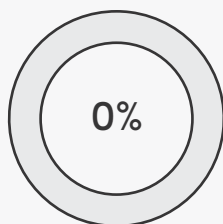
When we asked Detractors who are not involved in D&I at their company what's stopping them, the number-one reason they cited was: "D&I efforts do not benefit to me." Zero percent of Detractors who manage others believe that building a diverse team boosts their leadership skills, and very few see a connection between diversity and innovation.

### Understanding the value of D&I

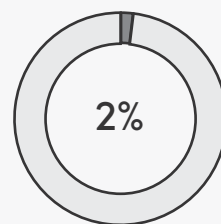
Detractors\* who agree that a diverse team would:



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



Improve their reputations at their companies

\*This question was only asked of respondents who have direct reports

Giving company messaging a belonging focus may help this disenfranchised cohort feel better recognized as valuable members of the workforce—and help them see how they can progress in their careers when they model the mission of D&I. However, as we'll further explore in our roadmap on page 25, talent specialists fostering a welcoming and productive workplace need not expend all of their energy trying to change the minds of majority men who strongly oppose D&I. Leaders should set clear company guidelines that emphasize their values—and stand by them. If a Detractor voices opinions that contradict those values, or deny the lived experience of others, the organization should be prepared to respond. As we found in the first installment of this series, employees with high belonging scores are more likely to work at organizations where everyone is accountable to the same set of values, regardless of seniority or performance.<sup>22</sup>

Top reason Detractors<sup>23</sup> cite for not getting involved in their organizations' D&I efforts

**D&I efforts do not benefit me**

*"I rarely participate in D&I efforts at my organization. There are very few D&I efforts related to old, White men!"*

White male Baby Boomer

*“There’s lots of focus on those who are ‘different,’ but there’s no celebration of those who are ‘traditional’—White, Christian, male.”*

White man in senior management

*“I don’t feel that I can take part in conversations about diversity and inclusion at work because if I’m not toeing the politically correct rhetoric, I will be labeled and discriminated against for not being the corporate drone they expected and demand.”*

White male Baby Boomer

*“Many times in the name of diversity, it feels that a form of reverse discrimination is created.”*

White male Gen Xer

## MEET JAMES

In 2017, when James Damore’s internal memo “Google’s Ideological Echo Chamber” hit the Internet, he went from unknown software engineer to one of Silicon Valley’s most polarizing figures—and from Googler to ex-Googler—almost overnight.

Damore, politically right-leaning and Millennial, had grown increasingly frustrated by his company’s emphasis on D&I. He felt the company’s D&I efforts ignored the importance of diversity of thought and “ideological diversity” in favor of a push for increased representation across gender and race.

“When it comes to diversity and inclusion, Google’s left bias has created a politically correct monoculture that maintains its hold by shaming dissenters into silence,” Damore writes. To make his point, Damore lays out statistics to prove that the gender gap in tech is due not just to a toxic culture and lopsided hiring practices but also to the fact that women may be biologically less suited to work in the industry (his interpretation of those statistics have since been questioned).<sup>24</sup>

He also argues that programs and classes restricted to certain genders or races are “discriminatory,” “unfair,” and “divisive.” And that we should “treat people as individuals” rather than focus on their membership in a certain demographic group. Damore offers a list of fixes, including to hold more conversations about the

costs and benefits of D&I, “de-moralize diversity,” and “de-emphasize empathy.”

The memo, intended for fellow Googlers, was quickly leaked to *Vice News* and soon after went viral.<sup>25</sup> In response, Google Chief Executive Officer Sundar Pichai released a company-wide memo of his own, reaching the conclusion that in his sweeping assertion that any group was less capable than others, Damore had advanced harmful stereotypes in the workplace—and violated the company’s code of conduct.<sup>26</sup>

*“...[The] left bias has created a politically correct monoculture that maintains its hold by shaming dissenters into silence.”*

For Damore, his firing was proof that the company is a left-wing “echo chamber” determined to silence his and other conservatives’ political views. After he was let go, Damore spoke frequently about his feelings of being unjustly fired and disenfranchised from the culture at his organization. In an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal*, Damore accused his former employer of being “intolerant of scientific debate and reasoned argument.”<sup>27</sup>

Damore filed—and has since dropped—a class action lawsuit against Google alleging discrimination against White conservative men.<sup>28</sup>



## PART II: PROFILE OF A PERSUADABLE

Persuadables make up nearly half of the majority male workforce. As a group, they seem to be reticent to engage, and to hold a range of contradictory views.

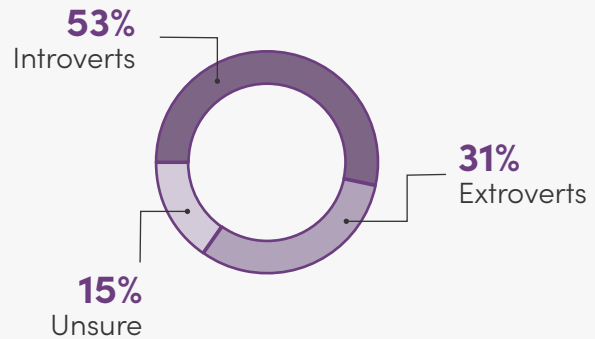
The majority of Persuadables are introverts. Another way we know they're hesitant to touch on sensitive topics: they're the *most* likely of all majority men in our sample to be unsure if their political views align with those of their colleagues. Compounded by their introversion, men in this group may feel it's inappropriate—not to mention uncomfortable—to start conversations about sensitive issues such as race, gender, and politics.<sup>29</sup>

That could explain why Persuadables hold a contradictory mix of attitudes toward D&I. Persuadables are more likely than Detractors to think D&I benefits everyone, but more likely than True Believers to think D&I efforts benefit some at the expense of others. They're a group on the fence.

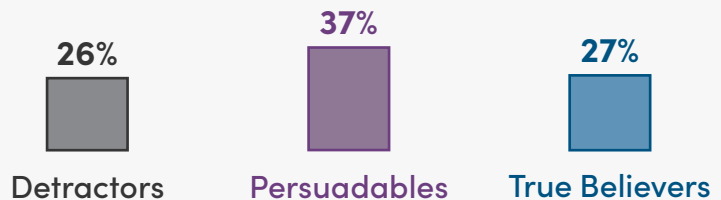
*"I respect D&I and I do my part, but I would not consider myself a strong advocate. Everyone is created equal and has the ability to take advantage of [the same] opportunities."*

White male remote worker

Persuadables who are:



Majority men who don't know if their political views are similar to most of their colleagues' views



### Attitudes that Persuadables are more likely to have than Detractors

- "Diversity and inclusion efforts benefit everyone"
- "Our business leaders should reflect the diversity of our country's population"

### Attitudes that Persuadables are more likely to have than True Believers and Detractors

- "Men and women should have equal access to career opportunities"

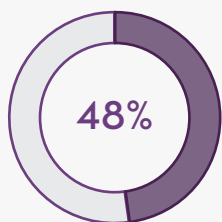
### Attitudes that Persuadables are more likely to have than True Believers

- "Focusing on difference is divisive"
- "Diversity and inclusion efforts benefit some groups at the expense of others"
- "We should treat everyone the same"

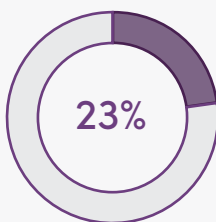
Many of these attitudes highlight opportunities for education. For example, many Persuadables believe that men and women should have equal access to opportunity—and that everyone should be treated the same. However, given systemic gender bias, giving men and women the same treatment won't lead to equal access for men and women. Helping this group better understand that all groups are not experiencing the same treatment, and face different obstacles, could help move them along in their allyship.

### Understanding the value of D&I

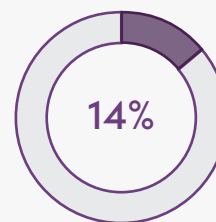
Persuadables\* who agree that a diverse team would:



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



Improve their reputations at their companies

\*This question was only asked of respondents who have direct reports

Top reason Persuadables<sup>30</sup> cite for not getting involved in their organizations' D&I efforts

**I'm too busy**

When it comes to leadership, many Persuadables who manage others see the business case for building a diverse team, but few see any benefit to their own career success of doing so. Persuadables that haven't been involved in D&I at their companies most often say it's because they're "too busy."

Persuadables have a higher median belonging score than Detractors. But if members of this group are reluctant to seek connection and clarity, they'll need signals, spaces, and help to do so.

*"I don't want to perpetuate bias, but I'm focused more on accomplishing what is asked of me and my team to achieve. I'm encouraging of those that want to participate or even lead D&I efforts, but many of the events are after work or weekends, when frankly I would just rather spend time with my family."*

White man in senior management

*"Let's just be people. Personally, I just don't factor race or ethnicity into how I deal with people. People are good or bad, have good traits and/or bad traits—nothing to do with race, so I'm not an advocate of D&I."*

White male Baby Boomer

*“I don’t feel there’s much I can do to promote diversity and inclusion. The ability to get just regular work done is so hard that there’s rarely interest or time to work on the ‘higher order’ tasks that promote a healthy culture.”*

White male senior individual contributor

## DANAHER +FRIENDS STRATEGY

Every Associate Resource Group (ARG) at Danaher has an “and Friends” (shown as +Friends) component, which gives majority men a way to act upon their allyship with various groups—women, LGBTQ, Asian, and colleagues of African American Descent—without the hesitancy that may arise when joining a resource group for an identity they don’t possess themselves. This structure allows each ARG to disseminate its own set of expectations and resources to its allies, which can differ vastly depending on happenings outside the workplace and that group’s unique needs at the moment. With majority men making up a large segment of the +Friends community, Danaher’s D&I team already has a line of communication with many of the True Believers in its majority men population—key to ongoing and future efforts to activate majority men on D&I imperatives.

## MEET FREDERIC

Frederic is a trained doctor, whose career path led him unexpectedly into hospital administration, where he has flourished and now works on a majority-female team. “I am informed,” he shares when asked about his involvement in D&I at his company, “but not as plugged in as they would like me to be.” Now, as a White man in an executive position, he adds, “Honestly, it’s a time commitment to be truly active.”

As an older Gen Xer, Frederic describes himself as a very hard worker. In the wake of the pandemic, he feels proud that his team shared his rigorous work ethic, and “never looked at the clock, never looked at the calendar. We approached the job as something critical to accomplish.”

As a leader, Frederic makes a concerted effort to put others at ease, but is also cautious not to “take that to an extreme where people can become too familiar.” Politically conservative and a self-described introvert, Frederic speaks often about his desire to lead with honesty and integrity—his “founding principles,” as he calls them. “I think most people recognize me as someone who will readily admit if I don’t know something and ask for help,” he says. “I am not going

to expect others to help me if I can’t disclose what’s going on and what I need.”

It comes naturally for Frederic to share elements of his background, too. He acknowledges that his experience as a first-generation college student, and the son of parents who held multiple jobs to put food on the table, helps him relate to a range of colleagues. In fact, he’s always preferred the company of nurses to surgeons, he shares, noting: “Nurses are the individuals that can help me be successful. If I make them my ally and show appreciation for what they do, they can make my life much better.”

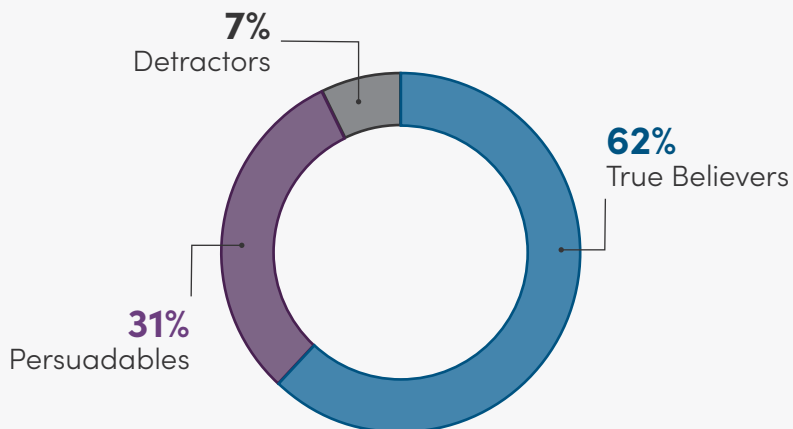
*“It’s a time commitment to be truly active.”*

Frederic is honest about more than just his working-class roots. “I was raised in a horribly racist family,” he recalls. “It helps me to be honest about that rather than bury it.” For now, Frederic views D&I as a project of personal learning and introspection, and feels that tapping into his founding principles is important enough—and a metric of how far he’s come. “I’m able to easily measure my progress compared to the way I was raised. I’m always a work in progress.”

## PART III: PROFILE OF A TRUE BELIEVER

Now let's take a look at True Believers. Members of this group—an encouraging 42% of majority men—say that D&I is very or extremely important to them at work. To find the True Believers in organizations, talent specialists can look first to Millennials, who are more likely than older generations to think D&I is very important. Next, they can look to senior leaders, who are more likely than junior employees to be True Believers. Current and future leaders, then, are highly likely to be True Believers—a great source of hope.

### Majority men who are C-suite/executives



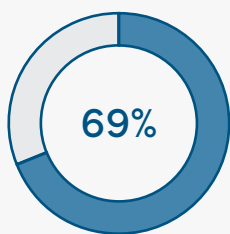
*"I realized that to be impactful, I needed a lot more raw material than I had. I needed to get to know women and professionals of color, get into real conversations, build safe spaces for them to tell me what they were up against. That enriched my life, widened my circle, and helped me formulate tangible solutions I could lead from."*

Kent Gardiner, Former Chair, Crowell & Moring LLP

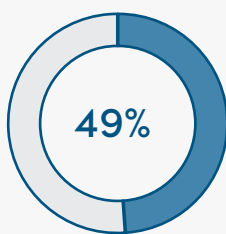
Why is the case for D&I clearer to those at the top? In interviews, senior leaders shared that diverse and inclusive teams have helped them find greater success. They also see how a diversifying employee and consumer base will require new approaches and solutions—and carry risks if they get it wrong.

### Understanding the value of D&I

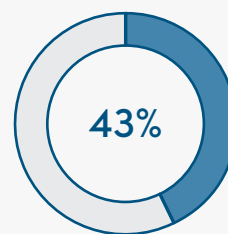
*True Believers\* who agree that a diverse team would:*



Lead to more innovation



Make them better leaders



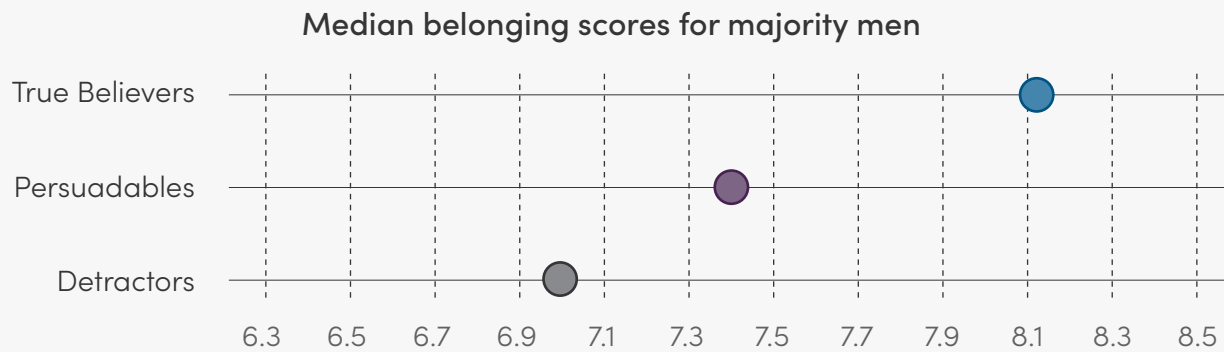
Improve their reputations at their companies

\*This question was only asked of respondents who have direct reports

*"If you pay attention to different cohorts, you have a market advantage. If you don't, you're missing ideas and talent."*

White male Millennial

Most exciting, True Believers have the highest median belonging score of all archetypes. True Believers aren't threatened or frightened—or angry—about the push for diverse representation; they're working to educate themselves and build bridges across difference.



*“I know I had a lot going for me, so for someone with less privilege to get onto the same playing field as me, they probably had to overcome a lot more—that has to be factored into hiring and promotion decisions as well.”*

White male Millennial

We find that True Believers are more likely than other majority men to have educated themselves on issues of racism and sexism. They're more likely to say that “men and women do not have equal access to career opportunities” and that “individuals of different races do not have equal access to career opportunities.”

**Attitudes that are more common among True Believers than among other majority men**

“Diversity and inclusion efforts benefit everyone”

“Men and women do not have equal access to career opportunities”

“Individuals of different races do not have equal access to career opportunities”

“Our business leaders should reflect the diversity of our country’s population”

“Improved diversity and inclusion would increase my organization’s profits”

“If my company had a greater focus on diversity and inclusion, my career prospects would improve”

When it comes to acting on these beliefs, there’s room for improvement. On one hand, compared to other majority men, it’s more likely that True Believers are willing to engage in workplace conversations about race, gender, the LGBTQ movement, and D&I. And the link between diversity and innovation is clear to nearly seven in ten True Believers who have direct reports. However, fewer than half of them think building a diverse team would make them better leaders—and even fewer say it would improve their reputations.

That may be one reason why only 56% of True Believers, even though they think D&I is very important, have participated in D&I efforts at their organizations. Just like their Persuadable peers, uninvolved True Believers also cite a lack of time as the number-one reason they hold back. After all, with so many competing priorities, if they can't see the individual benefit, why find time in the hectic workday? To further activate True Believers and inspire them to claim the title of our final archetype—Partner—talent specialists need to give them the tools and incentives. In our next section, we'll explore how.

*"I consider myself a strong advocate of diversity and inclusion. I actively participate in a program to promote inclusive leadership in the company. I also deliberately try to apply these skills to my daily interactions with direct reports and peers."*

White male Gen Xer

*"Getting involved in D&I gave me a sense of passion for the human side of corporate America. Having that privilege made me feel that my work for the company was more important and valuable."*

Mark Stephanz, Co-President, Kora Advisors Inc.

## MEET BILL

Bill, a senior manager at a Big Four accounting firm, is invested in D&I at his company—but wonders and worries about the role he should play as a White man. Raised by a single mother, Bill entered his career committed to supporting and empowering women to succeed. Today, he volunteers on his organization's task force to retain top female talent, and has also participated in an initiative to help women connect to support and sponsorship.

"I'm highly aware of my own situation," Bill reflects, "the benefits I have because of who I am, and those benefits not being there for others. At the very least, I can advocate on behalf of other people, and make others aware of their bias." When a hire was made recently outside of the normal process, he questioned the senior partner's motivations for bringing on a new team member—what qualifications, he pushed the partner, called for such special treatment? "That person also happened to look a lot like me," Bill recalls. The hiring decision, he recognized, was likely influenced by the fact that "the new hire reminded the senior partner of himself."

In his day-to-day work, Bill works hard to build an atmosphere of psychological safety and inclusive leadership. That part doesn't come naturally to him. But, acknowledging that it can be challenging to open

up to your boss, he tries to model vulnerability for his reports. "I don't just ask, 'How are you?'" he explains. "I talk about my current situation, where I'm at, how my life has changed. That gives them permission to share." During the pandemic and ensuing great migration to remote work, Bill is glad that his company has emphasized connecting with colleagues over video instead of just email. It's helped foster a sense of human connection, he feels. "We're interacting more on a more personal level than we did before," Bill reflects, adding that it's humanizing to see glimpses of living spaces, dogs, and kids. "It's allowed me to know my colleagues better. And they get to know me better."

*"I'm highly aware of my own situation, the benefits I have because of who I am, and those benefits not being there for others."*

However, though Bill is an active supporter of D&I efforts at his organization, as a Millennial making his way up the career ladder, he still sometimes struggles to understand his place in the conversation. "I naturally want to be a leader. But in these projects, that's not my role," he says. "In a top talent program, for example, I want to be a strong voice, but is that my place? Am I taking away a role someone else deserves or should have?"

# SECTION III: THE PATH TO PARTNERSHIP

In this section, we explore how to move majority men to action. First, we'll introduce an aspirational archetype, Partner, then walk through five steps to help all majority men better see the benefits of D&I and enlist them in the campaign to unlock belonging at work for all employees.

## MEET PARTNERS

As their name indicates, True Believers *believe* in the good of D&I but don't always convert goodwill into action. Members of this group often mentor and sponsor across difference if they are in a position to do so, but there's more they could do.

Fewer than half of True Believers have ever confronted behavior demeaning to women, people of color, or LGBTQ individuals. Many True Believers, we heard in interviews, are uncomfortable starting conversations on sensitive topics, hesitate to take the time to sponsor an employee resource group (ERG), and are unsure about stepping in to protect employees of different backgrounds. This failure to speak up can be deeply alienating for many, and work against building a culture of belonging for all.<sup>31</sup>

Partners, our fourth and final majority male archetype, talk the talk *and* walk the walk. They're comfortable (or learning to be comfortable) with a "call out"—because it's part of the learning process—and they speak up when they notice a microaggression or biased behavior toward a colleague. They aren't afraid to start conversations about tough topics like racism, sexism, and ableism. Partners have learned when to listen and make space, and they've learned when to lead.

Today, few majority men have mastered all of the moves in the following list, leveling up to partnership. With better incentives and approaches in place, diversity practitioners and talent specialists can help True Believers convert into true Partners.

*"If we don't talk about it, then racism and sexism get swept under the rug. It's important that a leader show willingness to talk about these things and set the standard that they will not be tolerated."*

White man in mid-management

*"A lot of executives are taught to be color- and gender-blind. But it's a critical leadership skill to see things from more than one perspective, get a more complete view of the world, acknowledge and validate differences."*

Michael Welp, PhD, Cofounder, White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP|FDGlobal)

**Most True Believers have voluntarily:**

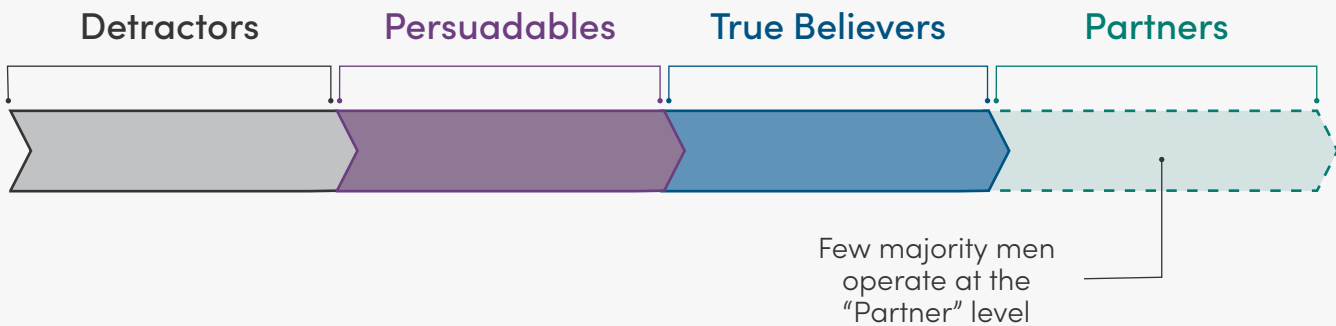
- ✓ Mentored a White woman\*
- ✓ Mentored a woman of color\*
- ✓ Mentored a man of color\*
- ✓ Sponsored a White woman\*
- ✓ Sponsored a woman of color\*
- ✓ Sponsored a man of color\*
- ✓ Attended a training on how to behave inclusively\*\*
- ✓ Sought others' opinions and feedback in their day-to-day work\*
- ✓ Hired someone of a different background than their own\*

**Most True Believers have not:**

- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans women
- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans people of color
- ✗ Confronted behavior that demeans LGBTQ individuals
- ✗ Asked a colleague open questions about an identity that is different from their own identity
- ✗ Voluntarily attended an ERG (or affinity group) meeting for employees with a different background than their own\*\*
- ✗ Voluntarily helped lead an ERG or affinity group\*\*
- ✗ Voluntarily sponsored an ERG or affinity group\*\*

\*Only includes responses from respondents who are in a position to do this

\*\*Only includes responses from respondents whose companies have these programs



*"Coming from the position of the White, male, native-born citizen, I feel it's incumbent on me to stand up against racism and sexism when I see it."*

White male individual contributor

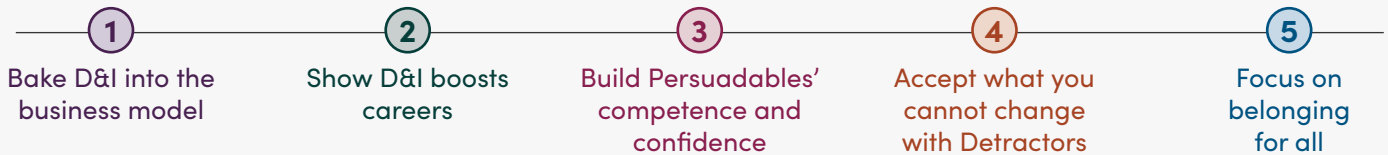
*"I am willing and have had conversations about sexism and racism in the workplace. It's all about learning, not being offended, and not offending others. If we do not talk about how interactions make people feel, we never learn to be better."*

White man in mid-management



# THE ROADMAP

We now have a clearer picture of majority men, from Detractors who scoff at the D&I conversation, to hesitant Persuadables, to True Believers, primed for action. How do we convert Persuadables into True Believers, and True Believers into Partners—and what do we do about Detractors? These five steps address the primary concerns of these groups, engage those who've felt overlooked, and make it crystal clear why belonging lies at the heart of this work.



## 1 Bake D&I into the business model

Both Persuadables and True Believers who haven't gotten involved in their companies' D&I efforts cited "I'm too busy" as the biggest hurdle to getting involved. Sure, D&I is important—maybe even very important. But who's got the time?

This is a fundamental challenge that people leaders face today: we need to move D&I off the sidelines and fully integrate it into the operating ethos of our organizations. That means organizations need to signal to all of their employees, especially executives and team leaders, that D&I isn't a second job; it's a thread that runs through all of the work they do.

Many of the activities we outlined on the prior page, such as confronting behavior that demeans others, don't take much time and can become second nature. In the next step, we'll look at another approach to help majority men understand that D&I isn't about making time—it's full time, and it can make a difference in your career.

*"A lot of people don't see how D&I is relevant to their day-to-day. As much as I've talked about the positives, people are rushed."*

White male Millennial

*"Diversity and inclusion are table stakes. Belonging is the breakthrough. Majority men can use their influence to make others feel included, respected, and safe as they open up the space for everyone to have a voice. This builds people up and brings people together. It unlocks conversations and begins a journey of exploration and humanity."*

Pat Wadors, Chief Talent Officer, ServiceNow

## NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Examine your organization** to find majority men who believe in equity and partnership. Work with them to find opportunities, and time in their week, to get involved.
- **Prioritize D&I competencies**, such as exhibiting inclusive leadership behaviors, in performance reviews.
- **Reach out directly** to majority men; you're more likely to make time for something you are called, and encouraged, to participate in.

## 2 Show D&I boosts careers

To bring majority men into the fold, savvy companies can demonstrate that D&I isn't just altruistic—D&I is good for you. Most True Believers who manage others see the connection between diverse teams and innovation, likely because it has been so well-documented and publicized. However, it's a bit abstract. The concrete benefit to leaders' own careers isn't clear. Most majority male managers, including True Believers, don't see a career or reputational benefit of becoming inclusive leaders of diverse teams.

The belonging scores in this report show that there is a career upside to getting good at this work: those who believe in D&I have much higher belonging scores than their skeptical peers. And those with higher belonging scores are less likely to be stalled, and more likely to be engaged.

To kick off this virtuous cycle, share the stories of majority male leaders who have reaped the career benefits from hiring and leveraging diverse teams. When they share openly how emphasizing D&I strengthened their leadership and helped them advance, they establish a new leadership standard.

Finally, encourage your top leaders to brag about the D&I competencies of their executive team and protégés. That will help others understand that inclusive leaders earn strong reputations.

*"I've risen pretty quickly at my organization, and I think it's because of my style as a leader. My advice: pick people that are vastly different from you in as many cases as you can—they'll help you get as complete a picture as possible so you can make the best decisions."*

White male senior executive

*"If 'Type A,' competitive individuals know that they're significantly judged on their ability to foster a belonging culture and a diverse environment, that gives them the incentive to excel at it. But you have to credibly elevate it over traditional measures."*

Kent Gardiner, Former Chair, Crowell & Moring LLP

## NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Give role models the microphone** whenever and wherever you can. Build time and space to share the stories of inclusive leaders who are proud to talk about how prioritizing D&I has helped grow their careers.
- **Bring purpose to the paycheck** by tying compensation conversations, including bonuses, to diverse hiring, retention, and promotion, as well as 360 team reviews that capture inclusive leadership competencies.
- **Harness competition.** Building a culture of belonging and engaging in D&I work does not have to be antithetical to employees' competitive edge. Channel those impulses to catalyze D&I efforts by lifting up leaders who prioritize the values of diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and by making it crystal clear that to reach their level, you'll need to embody these values, too.

### 3 Build Persuadables' competence and confidence

For Persuadables, engagement and education are crucial. Nuanced acknowledgment of systemic inequities, and readiness to correct for them, requires education and understanding. Although True Believers are more likely than other majority men to have educated themselves on tough topics like racism and sexism, not all resources are comprehensive, and this is work that takes a lifetime of learning and self-reflection—so, a refresh is likely helpful for them as well.

In order to act, each individual needs to understand their positional power. Through a workplace culture that encourages open dialogue, majority men can be encouraged to reflect on their own advantages and better understand issues impacting colleagues from underrepresented groups.

Because of the weight of these issues and historical trauma borne through centuries of systemic racism, members of underrepresented groups in the workforce may react with anger and frustration, particularly toward White men; the “fix” for this is twofold. Majority men can learn to let down their defenses, receive pushback in a spirit of understanding, and seek to grow. But they also need to know when they’re welcomed to listen and learn, versus when the floor is open for their education and active participation. Program leaders can provide that clarity. Find a peaceful, productive middle ground where employees of color aren’t asked to perform unpaid emotional labor to explain racism, but majority men have a safe space to field their questions, confusion, and concerns.

*“To every person that says, ‘I can’t speak for fear of messing up,’ I’ll tell them, ‘Do you think everything you say is going to be correct?’ Acknowledge that you’re human. Acknowledge that you want to learn how other people perceive what you say. If I say something offensive, I want to understand.”*

Michael Bracken, Sector Vice President, Engineering and Sciences, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems

## NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Provide education and resources** on structural racism and sexism, with books such as Ibram X. Kendi’s *How to Be an Antiracist* and Iris Bohnet’s *What Works: Gender Equality by Design*, and podcasts like Scene on Radio’s “Seeing White.” (For a more comprehensive list, check out our guide in a prior report, *Being Black in Corporate America*).<sup>32</sup>
- **Offer training** for all majority men, including True Believers, on speaking up against bias in the moment, including against other majority men.
- **Help fight the fear of being “called out,”** for majority men and others, by emphasizing trust and partnership, encouraging leaders to tell stories of working through an uncomfortable moment, and sharing scripts (see our White Men as Full Diversity Partners sidebar on the next page).
- **Take out the guesswork;** signal clearly to majority men, in ERG messaging, for example, when and where they are welcome and wanted to engage in conversation and allyship.

## HOW TO TURN A “CALL OUT” INTO COALITION

It’s jarring to be “called out” on an act of bias—or “hit a speed bump,” as Michael Welp, advisor on this project and cofounder of White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP|FDPGlobal), calls it. But silence, disengagement, and defensiveness are poor short-term strategies that halt meaningful change toward a belonging culture. Leaders of today’s workforce who want to engage in diversity, inclusion, and belonging work need better training, and a better set of tools, to understand, prepare for, and even come to appreciate these bumps as needed growth points on a journey toward powerful leadership and meaningful partnership across difference.

### Seek to understand/reflect—not respond/solve

These moments can be jarring. If you feel yourself jumping to defend yourself, or getting frustrated or angry, take a moment to pause, and offer to pick up the conversation at a later time.

*Try this script: “Thank you. It’s really hard to hear that. Can I spend some time reflecting on what you shared and connect with you in a few hours?”*

### Acknowledge impact—don’t defend intent

When we’re “called out,” or accused of committing a microaggression, we often go straight to defending our intent (i.e., what we *really meant* by what we said or did). In these moments, impact—how our words or actions made a person or group feel—is all that truly matters. If you sense it’s important to restate your intent, you can, but only do so if you’re prepared to first and foremost emphasize and recognize your impact on others.

*Try this script: “I appreciate hearing about my impact. It’s not what I intended, so there is clearly a blind spot for me there.”*

### Follow up and incorporate feedback

Let them know you appreciate their courage in coming to you—this is especially important when dealing with a direct report. If an issue came up in a team meeting, follow up in front of the whole team. Doing so normalizes transparency and accountability instead of secrecy, shame, and silence.

*Try this script: “I just want to apologize again for what I said/did. I want you to know that what you said didn’t just fall off my plate. It’s feeding my learning and my development as a person.”*

### Be proactive

As you continue to educate yourself about microaggressions, you may notice a slip before your team does—or your team may not yet know you encourage them to speak up to help you in your learning. Call yourself out, explaining where you felt you goofed, how you feel about it, and how you’ll try to correct for the issue in the future. Bear in mind that it’s never too late to address a “speed bump”—if you didn’t catch yourself or a colleague in the moment, or didn’t feel comfortable speaking up at the time, bring it up the next chance you get.

*Try this script: “Wow, I just noticed myself, and I’m sorry for the impact that had. Here I am as a [White] person [insert microaggression—e.g., mispronouncing names of people that aren’t White]. I feel embarrassed.”*

### Intervene—but prepare for pushback

Especially if you are in a position of power or part of the insider group, it’s important to intervene when you see a situation that doesn’t fit in a culture of belonging for all. But understand that not every colleague will appreciate the same intervention. Ask them how they’d like to be supported. Follow up and take feedback.

*Try this script during the meeting:  
“I’m noticing that when \_\_\_ speaks, she gets interrupted. That happened twice in the last twenty minutes. I want to be sure we’re aware of that. What’s it like, \_\_\_, getting interrupted? How can we monitor that as a group? I probably interrupt, too, and I want to be held accountable.”*

*Try this script after the meeting:  
“Was that helpful? Or do you wish I hadn’t done that?”*

*“We all make mistakes, even those of us who have been working in this field for twenty-five years. You learn to have a pretty strong sense of humility, because your next learning moment could be right around the corner. If my goal is to try to be innocent, or save face, I’ll interrupt my own learning process.”*

Michael Welp, PhD, Cofounder, White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP|FDPGlobal)

## LOCKHEED MARTIN'S EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP OF INCLUSIVE TEAMS (ELOIT)

*Opening leaders' eyes to the power of inclusive culture through experiential learning*

**PURPOSE:** In partnership with White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP|FDPGlobal), help leaders understand the norms of White male culture that can exclude others at work.

**PARTICIPANTS:** All White male executives (director level and above) are required to participate in a White Men's Caucus Learning Lab; the Full Diversity Partners Learning Lab and Summit are open to other executive and non-executive leaders. Learning Labs are designed for a maximum of 23 colleagues, and Summits are capped at 80 participants.

**STRUCTURE:** White Men's Caucus Learning Lab: 3.5-day program for White male executives to understand their role in creating an inclusive culture; Full Diversity Partners Learning Lab: 3.5-day program for men and women of all backgrounds to explore D&I and learn to forge diverse partnerships at work; Summit: 1.5-day event that recreates Learning Lab exercises at scale.

**CONTENT:** Participants engage with topics such as insider-outsider dynamics, "and/both" thinking, and systemic privilege through group exercises led by trained facilitators; ELOIT includes an alumni network for further learning.

**RESULTS:** Almost 11,000 company leaders have participated; in performance reviews, direct reports give ELOIT participants higher inclusivity scores than non-participants.

**DIFFERENTIATOR:** Mandatory participation for White male leaders underscores the company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; WMFDP expert facilitation creates a psychologically safe atmosphere. With a focus on developing inclusive leaders of the future, Lockheed Martin is extending Summit offerings to an increased number of individual contributors.

## NORTHROP GRUMMAN CORPORATION'S BUILDING THE BEST CULTURE (BBC)

*Growing senior leaders' capability and confidence to cascade an inclusive, bias-free culture*

**PURPOSE:** Give leaders the cultural competence to engineer, support, and sustain a diverse and inclusive workplace for all employees.

**CHAMPION:** Executive champions are drawn from Northrop Grumman's Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council, an internal partnership of global senior leaders who promote company D&I objectives.

**PARTICIPANTS:** BBC has reached 300 company leaders.

**STRUCTURE:** Two-day in-person experiential workshop.

**CONTENT:** A series of workshops cover privilege, dominant culture, unconscious bias intervention strategies, inclusive leadership behavior, and diverse talent development techniques.

**RESULTS:** A post-program survey finds that 95% of participants feel better equipped to navigate company culture and lead inclusively, understand the company's D&I strategy and goals, and believe the program has taught them skills they can utilize to take an active role in creating an inclusive workplace culture.

**DIFFERENTIATOR:** BBC is 60% the cost of similar diversity education programs.

## 4 Accept what you cannot change with Detractors

What do we do about Detractors? Every employee matters—and by making a case for belonging, emphasizing that *all* employees deserve to be recognized for their individuality and humanity could lead some Detractors to an “aha” moment. Remember, Detractors’ number-one reason for not getting involved in D&I at their companies: they didn’t see what was in it for them. Maybe when they hear the individual case, and see it modeled in their company’s leadership, that will win them over.

But not all men will join the movement. And talent leaders, already stretched thin, risk sinking time and resources into a group whose views may be calcified in opposition to D&I. According to the “backfire effect” coined by psychologists Brendan Nyhan and Jason Reifler, when confronted with hard evidence that counters our point of view, we tend to stick to our thinking—and may even double down on our originally held belief.<sup>33</sup>

Focus on those who are wholeheartedly with you and those who are beginning to understand the vision. When it comes to those who oppose your mission—let it be. If an individual vocally opposes your company values, damaging psychological safety and belonging for others, demonstrate to them—and to others—that everyone is accountable to the same set of values, regardless of seniority or performance.

*“When you talk about Detractors, how do you either make them Persuadables or make sure they’re not disruptors? While it may be important to acknowledge them without othering them, it is also important that the values of the organization are articulated—and one does not center the Detractors.”*

Prof. John A. Powell, Haas Chancellor’s Chair in Equity and Inclusion, Professor of Law, African American Studies, and Ethnic Studies, University of California, Berkeley

*“You have a group of people rowing a boat: someone in the front rowing as hard as they can, a bunch in the middle doing a good job—then somebody in the back, drilling holes in the boat. I think we have to find the drillers and figure out how to have a conversation with them. If they’re not willing to have a conversation, then we have to make a company decision as to whether they belong at the company. It’s as simple as that.”*

Michael Bracken, Sector Vice President, Engineering and Sciences, Northrop Grumman Mission Systems

## NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Emphasize the company’s core values**, from onboarding to annual reviews to company intranet. Employees don’t have to like them, but do need to live by them.
- **Hold employees accountable** for adhering to company values.
- **Target True Believers and Persuadables** in your messaging around belonging and D&I; it’s crucial, as we’ve examined, to speak to majority men, but engaging with those who are staunchly opposed can be frustrating and (at times) counterproductive.

## 5 Focus on belonging for all

From the findings about True Believers, we see a relationship between belonging scores and D&I that should be extended to *all* in the workplace. Remember: True Believers are majority men who say D&I is very important to them at work. They also have sky-high belonging scores. Taken together, these insights form a virtuous circle. As they value D&I, they're more likely to get involved. When they get involved, they feel more engaged in their workplace communities—they feel that they belong.

This link between D&I involvement and belonging is hugely powerful for you as a D&I leader. Make the belonging business case to your leaders: those who belong will be engaged and loyal, and those who care about D&I imperatives are more likely to belong.

After all, just like any other employees, majority men need to know they're valued—in D&I, and in the organization as a whole. As humans, we thrive when we feel seen, connected, supported, and proud of our workplaces—and when we know that others feel the same way.

A centralized message of belonging can help all employees come together in coalition—but be careful, because messaging that is too vague can lead to confusion or further skepticism. Be clear about your company's vision for true belonging that breaks down norms of White male culture and allows us all to be a little bit more human.

*"I like shifting the D&I conversation to belonging, toward getting people to share their personal experiences—that's what leads to the most productive conversations."*

White male senior executive

*"Diversity, inclusion, and belonging is better than just diversity and inclusion. And here's why: straight, White, Christian males need to belong, too. All humans need to belong."*

White male Gen Xer

*"If we want to address the 'win-lose' perspective we often hear from White men, we can better emphasize the competitive advantage you can now get as a White man because you are actually good at diversity and inclusion. This cuts away at this positioning of 'diversity versus merit' that is so pervasive and cancerous—no matter who you are, whether business- or consumer-facing, there's a competitive advantage to embracing D&I."*

Chuck Shelton, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Greatheart Consulting

## NEXT STEPS FOR EMPLOYERS

- **Centralize "belonging"** in company messaging—but be deliberate, not vague, about what you envision for company-wide belonging.
- **Acknowledge the differences** that may hinder belonging for majority men and establish or promote ERGs for groups like introverts, parents, or veterans that can offer a "safe space."



## SERVICENOW'S DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

*Convening leaders annually for inspiration and accountability*

**PURPOSE:** For leaders to learn and talk about inclusive leadership, and renew their annual commitment to diversity, inclusion, and belonging (“DIBs”).

**PARTICIPANTS:** 150 of ServiceNow’s top leaders, representing 30 to 40% male participation.

**STRUCTURE:** One full-day program, plus a two-hour networking reception held the evening before.

**CONTENT:** Now in its third year, each summit builds on the conversation from the year prior, tackling issues like unconscious bias, courageous conversations, racial justice and equity, the business case for D&I, and belonging.

**RESULTS:** In 2019, facilitators distributed “courageous conversation cards” developed in partnership with Stanford VMware Women’s Leadership Innovation Lab. The cards described anonymized examples of microaggressions that had happened to employees, and encouraged role-play to learn how to mitigate different types of unconscious bias. The cards sparked a wave of requests for more trainings and workshops, and today, more than 2,000 conversation card sets have been delivered across the organization. Since the first summit, the number of women at the director level or above has increased by 8%.

**DIFFERENTIATOR:** The summit “meets people where they are.” Program leads don’t assume everyone is an expert. Rather, facilitators present concepts in an approachable way to encourage safe dialogue and offer interactive ways for participants to take action. The agenda is dynamic, shifting annually to meet the evolving needs of the company’s leadership.

## EY MAJORITY MEN APPROACH

*Making room for majority men on the D&I agenda*

“When it comes to discussing diversity and inclusion, we make sure to include men at the table to create an open dialogue,” says Karyn Twaronite, EY Global Vice Chair, Diversity & Inclusiveness. “To us, D&I is not a zero-sum game. For companies that want to grow, it’s about expanding the pie.” Ernst & Young LLP (EY) has long been committed to furthering the goals of D&I. In recent years, the company’s focus has been on the idea of building a sense of belonging for the full workforce, and to turbocharge the effort, organization leaders realized they needed to engage majority men.

As part of the multifaceted, company-wide strategy, male leaders are offered inclusive leadership training and opportunities to sponsor underrepresented talent. They are encouraged to participate in all D&I activities, including taking on executive sponsor roles for employee resource groups. To foster belonging among men, the firm is also revisiting certain policies: it recently extended its full paid parental leave benefit to any new parent, regardless of gender. In 2019, 55% of eligible men took full leave, which highlights that paternal leave is not only expected, but also something that men are beginning to see as a right instead of a privilege. What’s more is that it is a strong retention tool.

Cascading belonging for all is good for employees, and it’s good for EY. “When we harness the collective strength of our unique differences,” says Twaronite, “we team better, are more innovative, and ultimately deliver the best to our clients.”



## CONCLUSION

Society is changing rapidly. From COVID-19 to civil disobedience to uncivil rhetoric, as the events of 2020 unfold before our eyes, they bring turmoil, confusion, and trauma. They also bring with them a spirit of awakening and allyship for those in the majority.

The biggest takeaway from this report is a hopeful one: most of today's majority male leaders—and the leaders of tomorrow—believe in the importance of D&I. And when majority men lean into the imperative of diverse teaming and inclusive leadership, their own sense of belonging soars.

The vision of belonging for all is no mirage—it is an achievable reality. But to emerge from this unique moment in history with collaboration, communication, and community, rather than a greater sense of turmoil and division, majority men need to be included. Armed with the data in this report, we as leaders and talent specialists can help those who are newly reckoning with ideas of privilege, power, and race. We can ensure inclusivity and empathy are critical competencies for aspiring leaders. We can offer opportunities for education and spaces for dialogue. And, most importantly, we can draw majority men into the movement and hold them accountable as partners in the fight for more inclusive spaces.

*“If I’m watching the news and I see microaggressions or worse, it touches me. I’m like, ‘It stinks, that’s not fair, that’s not right’—and I move on. But when someone tells me a story about something that happened to them at this organization, I get mad—and interested in doing what I can do.”*

White male senior executive

*“We tend to see power as a zero-sum game, but that is only ‘power over.’ When we share power, we develop a much more potent form, ‘power with.’ This is the essence of bridging—to identify, access, and share resources across groups to the betterment of all.”*

Howard Ross, *Our Search for Belonging*<sup>34</sup>

*“We will only make a meaningful and lasting impact on the diverse communities we serve if we unite and provide a safe space for our diverse voices. That’s why a culture of belonging is critical. When people feel they can bring their authentic selves to work every day, and feel that their ideas, voices, and perspectives are valued, they create magic. Majority men must be incredible allies on the path to building belonging; it’s their opportunity to have a collective impact on our future.”*

Pat Wadors, Chief Talent Officer, ServiceNow

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