



MAY 2018



Editor's Note:

Today, we are sharing an article from Tom Verghese, author of *The Cultural Synergist* blog. Tom was a presenter at a Cultural Diversity Summit at PGE a number of years ago, and we so appreciated his insights into diversity and inclusion that we have kept in touch over the years. We hope you enjoy his February 2018 blog:

Isn't Inclusion all about being nice to people?

This is a question that I was recently asked during an interview for a podcast and I want to provide a perspective on that in this newsletter.



A definition of 'Diversity' is the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact. It's all the ways we differ. 'Inclusion' is recognizing, respecting and accommodating differences to create and sustain an environment where everyone can achieve their full potential. It's where we value, recognize and appreciate difference.

A key aspect of having diversity is managing differences and tensions. When there is diversity there are different viewpoints, different backgrounds, different generations, different ways of thinking and

different perspectives. When these differences meet, there tend to be sparks! That's what creates new ideas, innovation and alternative ways of thinking. It comes where there is tension that is created.

The key challenge therefore is how to have these 'tense' conversations in a respectful manner. So, instead of inclusion being about niceness, I would propose that 'being inclusive is having the ability to manage these tensions.' How does one have confronting conversations? How does one promote courageous feedback? How does one challenge the status quo in a respectful manner? How does one get heard?

If you are leading a team where there is diversity then more is expected of you. To ensure that there is inclusion in your team, demonstrate and role model:

1. The ability to ask questions, listen and paraphrase key points
2. The ability to articulate alternative viewpoints clearly
3. The ability to focus on the topic you are discussing rather than on the individual
4. The ability to accept the group consensus decisions and support them

If you can do all this, that's when you get the best of 'Diversity and Inclusion.'

FORUM NEWS



Members of [the Executive Forum team](#) were spotted at the **Habitat for Humanity HopeBuilder Breakfast** on April 25.

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