



Brown Line

# THE NEXT IQ

The Next Level of Intelligence on Diversity & Inclusion

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## To get change, we have to change.

In order for us to get true Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in our workplaces today, we have to change the way we think, talk and do D&I. We have to move from identity-based D&I to perspectives-based D&I. We have to shift from an “us vs. them” focus to a collective intelligence mindset.

This change allows everyone (regardless of identity) to feel invested in D&I, and people in historically underrepresented groups to be seen as individuals instead of members of a monolithic group. Although challenging for many reasons (resistance to change being the most onerous!), this change is necessary if we want to move from activity (of which there is plenty) to results (of which there are little).

Many D&I programs today are formed around immutable identities and draw rigid boundaries around the groups they’re set up to support and advance. Women. People of color. Gays and lesbians. People with disabilities. These programs equate “diverse” with “underrepresented” and “inclusion” with “equal opportunity.” Although the end goals of D&I are indeed full representation of all voices and equal opportunity for everyone to succeed regardless of their identities, the way we’re currently doing D&I is not only not getting us to the end goals, but we may be drifting away from the goals toward diversity fatigue and inclusion inertia.

You need look no further than the most recent research on diversity in C-suites, on boards and in the upper echelons of any industry to see, while we may be doing a lot, we aren’t getting a lot done. The identity-based paradigm predominant today worked relatively well through the 1980s, 1990s and even into this new millennium, but as we look at the data behind what these programs are achieving today, it’s evident that what we’re doing is no longer driving what we want to achieve.

Replacing identity-based D&I with perspectives-based D&I isn’t merely a semantic or even a programmatic shift. It’s a radical change in how we approach and create the change we want to achieve. This change from D&I circa last century to D&I today is the focus of the insights and tools

in *The Next IQ: The Next Level of Intelligence for 21st Century Leaders*. Based on cutting-edge research, which reveals that seeking and integrating diverse perspectives leads individuals to better decisions, more innovation and faster insight. And, the perspectives-based D&I model based on *The Next IQ* focuses on individuals seeking and integrating different perspectives to do their best work. This change, then, is about moving past D&I as an “us vs. them” proposition to D&I as an “in my personal best interest” investment.

In this model, D&I isn’t about doing something for someone else or having someone do something for you. It’s about doing something that enhances your intelligence because today’s world and work environments require you to be able to see and account for multiple perspectives in order for you to find the best solutions for rapidly changing problems. While companies like Google, Starbucks and Netflix have leveraged diverse perspectives for innovative success, the model works just as well for smaller organizations or individuals who want to take their leadership skills to the next level.

The shift to this model, however, isn’t without challenges. No matter how much we seek different perspectives, we also have strong unconscious preferences for similarities, comfort and predictability that make it difficult to seek and choose differences over the status quo. Creating a greater degree of awareness about these preferences and teaching concrete ways to circumvent them are prerequisites for shifting to *The Next IQ* D&I. These preferences are the intellectual crevices within which our presumptions, biases and prejudices lie, so working through them allows us to ensure our workplaces are truly working equally for everyone, not just a privileged few. By making D&I about the value of different perspectives, we’re actually better able to confront the reasons why differences divide us as much as they do.

D&I is about change. But to obtain it, we have to be willing to change the way we seek it. n



Visit [TCWMag.com](http://TCWMag.com) to watch Ms. Reeves continue her conversation about Diversity and Inclusion in an online video interview conducted by Cheryle Jackson, vice president of government affairs and corporate development for AAR Corp.