DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION
IN GOVERNMENT FOR WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document illustrates how Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) initiatives are proven drivers of improved workforce performance and mission delivery in the face of increasingly complex public service challenges. We explore how Executive Order 13583 — *Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce,* applies to the federal workforce and the creation of agency-specific D&I strategic plans. Relying on research and perspective from organizational development experts and our own recent survey findings, we highlight the shortcomings of partial or piecemeal approaches to D&I — and show how the most effective strategies embrace a comprehensive methodology of multiple, consistent and integrated D&I resources.

We will illustrate how a well-executed D&I program — with special emphasis on team dynamics and unique individual traits of workers — not only satisfies Executive Order 13583, but also represents a smart strategy to accelerate Return on Investment (ROI) and spur greater efficiency and effectiveness in an organization. We explain how Monster Government Solutions came to embrace a particular resource platform — *WIN Insights – A Monster Solution*, as the best way to apply these industry best practices for D&I in government settings, as well as in industry. We demonstrate how this learning platform of information, tools and functionality develops a workforce that is more efficient, engaged and productive.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION TO NAVIGATE AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX WORLD

Government organizations today face challenges of unprecedented scope and complexity: Transportation officials, for instance, struggle for efficiency and security across a vast and increasingly automated network of land, sea and air travel infrastructure. Health agencies grapple with huge volumes and varieties of data and human insight for mission-critical priorities like administering benefits, monitoring drug safety and tracking Zika or whatever the next emerging epidemic may be. Law enforcement and warfighters alike leverage vast networks of human and digital assets for real-time intelligence and strategic interventions against bad actors at home and abroad.

The following are a few illustrations of a government-wide phenomenon: The mission on behalf of taxpayers is getting harder and more complex, even as resources become more scarce. Most federal agencies understand the need to adapt to this reality. The mystery comes in deciding where – amid all the people, processes, and technologies that make up an organization – to focus precious time and money for changes and improvements. Sometimes, however, focus arrives in the form of federal guidance or regulations.

Such is the case with Executive Order 13583, *Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce*. The order requires each agency to develop Diversity and Inclusion strategic plans that focus on workplace diversity, workplace inclusion, and sustainability of these efforts through ongoing resource allocation and tracking of key metrics.

Agency executives don't necessarily welcome all regulations or mandates with open arms. The temptation to "check the box" may arise if a required initiative is viewed as a distraction or complication in the search for organizational efficiency and mission success. In the case of Executive Order 13583, a wealth of research and analysis from top workforce and organizational development experts shows that implementing an effective D&I strategy is a clear situation where something that's required also happens to be one of the smartest, most effective, and beneficial initiatives that an organization can pursue.

INCLUSIVE WORKFORCES ARE PROVEN DRIVERS OF INNOVATION AND EFFICIENCY

When conceived and implemented correctly, strategic D&I programs deliver powerful return on investment in the form of increased efficiency and improved mission performance – not to mention lower turnover and higher levels of job satisfaction – across the entire workforce. Indeed, the Center for Talent Innovation[1] found organizational performance of a diverse workforce is 1.45 times better than that of a non-diverse workforce, and diverse leadership teams tend to innovate more frequently.

Professor of Complex Systems, Political Science, and Economics at the University of Michigan, Scott E. Page's recently-published book, *"The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools and Societies"* (Princeton University Press), uses mathematical modeling and case studies to show how variety in staffing produces organizational strength. "People from different backgrounds have varying ways of looking at problems, what I call "tools." The sum of these tools is far more powerful in organizations with diversity than in ones where everyone has gone to the same schools, been trained in the same mold and thinks in almost identical ways[2]."

Another study[3] showed employee engagement through D&I strategies correlated with lower organizational turnover and increased customer satisfaction. Additional research[4] replicates this connection between D&I and customer/client satisfaction. These findings were reinforced by discussions that took place at a recent OPM Research Summit.[5] This evidence, along with many more studies,[6] establishes D&I strategies as clear drivers of organizational performance and success.

The particular implications for government are especially clear: A diverse and inclusive federal workforce positions agencies for better performance on the complex and unstructured missions they face. Consider how government executives are already familiar with calls for increasingly diverse technologies and data sources to keep up with today's complex, hyper-agile world. Similar logic applies to fostering diverse human perspectives within the workforce as well.

Just as we need better technology to manage today's digital complexities, so too should government embrace D&I to better serve an increasingly diverse U.S. population and an increasingly complex global network of people and cultures. Think back to the examples we mentioned at the outset: travel, health, and security. These and most other federal priorities involve conditions that are fast changing, complex and frequently international in nature – typically entailing complex social and cultural dynamics.

Leveraging the diverse perspectives of a varied, engaged and creative workforce gives agencies the edge amid complex organizational missions. It's something that NASA learned, with some difficulty, after the 1986 Challenger disaster. Engineers differed in their assessments of safety and risk, yet it was later found that recommendations not to launch (based on concerns about O ring performance on a relatively cold January morning) weren't adequately considered.

> *"Not just that, one feature of the highly homogeneous decision-making group is a phenomenon that is closely linked to a lack of diversity – the so-called normalization of deviation. This describes how, when an error or problem is repeated again and again, homogeneous groups tend to see it as being normal, without giving due consideration to the consequences.*
>
> *The Columbia tragedy serves to confirm that diversity substantially improves the chances of being able to generate innovative ideas and solutions."*

Today, NASA has one of the federal government's most advanced and effective D&I programs[7].

62% OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES HAVE EXPERIENCED **DIFFICULTY INTERACTING** WITH "DIFFERENT" COLLEAGUES

PITFALLS OF AN INCOMPLETE DIVERSITY STRATEGY

Unfortunately, successful implementation of D&I strategy is not guaranteed, and a prevalence of partial or piecemeal solutions has kept federal agencies from fully leveraging the benefits of D&I. Indeed, the "check the box" impulse we mentioned earlier can result in limited or one-time trainings that can't possibly cover and integrate the many individual, cultural and team dynamics involved in a successful D&I strategy.

Sub-par programs frequently lack follow-through and ongoing metrics to track progress. As a result, employees may not see how a limited D&I curriculum applies to their particular concerns or work environments. In the words of organizational theorist Erin K. Kelly[8], D&I training does little good if it's "just a stand-alone program that seeks to inform or perhaps shame managers and employees."

The lack of adequate D&I strategies in the federal arena helps explain how – even though Executive Order 13583 was enacted in August 2011 – perceptions about D&I's effectiveness in government still lag. A 2015 Monster Government Solutions - Government Business Council survey, for instance[9], showed 62-percent of federal employees have experienced difficulty interacting with "different" colleagues, and only a third of non-managers agreed that supervisors were effective in resolving diversity-related issues.

In the same survey, a random sample of 752 *Government Executive, Nextgov,* and *Defense One* online and print subscribers, *we found three quarters of respondents reported feeling misunderstood because a part of their identity differed from colleagues.*

The survey included people from 30 different departments and agencies who represented a diverse range of identities – including differences in age, gender, race, ethnicity, LGBT identity, veteran status, and disability status. A majority of every identity subgroup we surveyed reported feeling misunderstood; half of all respondents said their organization needs better D&I resources; just one in three felt managers were effective at resolving diversity-related issues.

EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT DIVERSITY PROGRAMS

The wealth of evidence and real world experience makes clear that D&I strategies are proven drivers of ROI, but only when conceived and implemented correctly. As MIT organizational theorist Thomas Malone[10] has said, "just getting a lot of smart people in a group does not necessarily make a smart group." Or as his MIT colleague at the Sloan School of Management, Edgar Schein[11], says, "If you do not manage culture, it manages you."

An effective D&I strategy is one that fosters work culture that thrives on employee differences while connecting employees through their commonalities. It is one that features a range of integrated tools and processes — including independent and peer-to-peer learning, coupled with expert guidance and advice from D&I and organizational development specialists. The strategy should be a road map that addresses key agency priorities, including:

- Identifying gaps in the workforce and determining impact on recruiting and retention focus

- Finding major identity commonalities to develop a better picture of employee values, and adopt practices that acknowledge or are sensitive to those commonalities

- Measuring workplace inclusivity perceptions at regular intervals — multiple times across the year — to ensure that employee engagement, inclusion, and other workplace initiatives are resulting in success and desired return on investment

- Leveraging the D&I strategy to make informed decisions on agency initiatives and priorities

Successful D&I strategies require a comprehensive environment of inclusion and engagement, backed by multiple, consistent, and integrated D&I resources that place special emphasis on team dynamics and unique individual traits, or identities, of workers. Backlash in the form of strengthened prejudice and implicit bias can result when D&I strategies focus excessively on social categories instead of personal identity. Extensive research suggests a conscious focus on unique traits, rather than the social categories to which people belong, is crucial for success.

ACCELERATING NEW THINKING: A PLATFORM FOR IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Monster Government Solutions, a business unit of Monster Worldwide, Inc., was established to fulfill the human capital management and recruitment needs of the federal government. Since then, Diversity and Inclusion has remained a key priority that has fueled both our contributions to diversity research (including the 2015 Monster Government Solutions - Government Business Council survey discussed earlier) and our own pursuit of a proprietary workforce solution that best fit the needs of our federal clients.

Against this backdrop, Monster has developed a strategic partnership with the D&I thought leader, Mark Williams, and the WIN Insights organization to bring this holistic Diversity and Inclusion platform to federal government, commercial, and non-profit organizations. WIN Insights is a strategic collaboration between Monster and WIN Insights, a minority-owned consulting and training firm that develops and publishes content focused on engagement, inclusion and organizational performance. WIN Insights was founded by Mark Williams, an experienced researcher, educator, consultant, and author in the field of identity and diversity who developed the influential "10 Lenses"[12] research-based framework. The 10 Lenses codifies some of the most common — often unspoken — perspectives Americans tend to have when viewing race, ethnicity, and cultural differences.

WIN Insights is a scalable platform that helps individuals, teams, and organizations perform better together by accelerating the adoption of identity, diversity, and inclusion principles in new ways. Crafted specifically for deployment in enterprise environments, this solution is a SaaS-based technology that can be used to unify HR, Diversity and Inclusion, EEO, Civil Rights, OMWI, and L&D functions related to identity, diversity, and inclusion.

Created by D&I and organizational development subject matter experts and practitioners, WIN Insights, provides consistent themes and context to ensure leaders, employees and D&I staff are exposed to the same key concepts, language and tools to foster alignment.

WIN Insights employs several new approaches to guide D&I efforts, including:

- **New Thinking** – to enhance understandings around identity and team dynamics

- **New Techniques** – to implement Diversity and Inclusion from both an organizational and individual perspective

   o In support of New Techniques is a Six "S" Response Model – with organizational modules on Scanning, Strategy Development and Systems Assessment; as well as individual modules on Self-Awareness, Sensitivity and Skills

- **New Ties** – to encourage new connections among diverse team members and better alignment among EEO, D&I, and HR personnel

- **New Technology** – to accelerate enterprise-wide adoption of identity, diversity, and inclusion through a scalable technology platform

WIN Insights technology accelerates the adoption of identity, diversity, and inclusion principles and improves organizational performance. Created by organizational development and diversity subject matter experts and practitioners, WIN Insights:

- Provides consistent language and approaches to ensure leaders, employees, and D&I staff are exposed to the same key concepts, language, and tools to foster alignment

- Collects and delivers aggregate data from assessments embedded in eLearning modules

- Unifies HR, D&I, EEO, Civil Rights, OMWI, and L&D functions related to identity, diversity, and inclusion

- Is a SaaS-based technology that can be used as standalone, or with Learning Management Systems

WIN Insights helps drive a work culture that thrives on employee differences while connecting employees through their commonalities. Through integration of independent and peer-to-peer learning coupled with advice from expert consultants, coaches, and trainers, WIN Insights boosts organization productivity by providing unique visibility into the composition of teams and organizations. Using this valuable insight, organizations can create inclusive working environments — improving workforce performance. WIN Insights helps teams increase their abilities to:

- Develop awareness of personal, cultural, and work style issues that are important to each team member

- Share accountability for monitoring and maintaining team norms that create an effective team culture

- Continuously measure and improve team chemistry to foster innovation, high performance, and retention

WIN Insights features several key components, including:

- A WIN 360 web-based team application for employees and managers to collectively understand team identity and team norms through a system of self-reported identity cards that clarify attributes like core values, work style, personal characteristics, and variations in holidays, commemorations, and civic engagements

- Several distinct eLearning tracks tailored to specific professionals within an organization – including executives, team leaders, managers, employees, and diversity/HR and EEO practitioners (including recruiters)

- Tools and resources that include best practices, learning rooms, a recruiter resource center, and comprehensive references on identity-related names, terms, travel, holidays, and celebrations

- Reports and analytics, based on a range of individual and team-generated data, that can be used to identify common interests, understand co-worker values, drive informed decision-making, and measure ROI

- Moderated peer-to-peer discussion forums, on-demand performance enhancement tools, and train-the-trainer resources

SUMMARY

Each federal agency needs to examine its own mission and the people, processes, and technologies aligned in support of that mission. When it comes to workforce development, however, we increasingly see consensus on Diversity and Inclusion strategies as proven tools that can transform the federal workforce to new levels of performance and satisfaction.

In the process, we build a representative workforce, shatter misperceptions, minimize backlash from old regulations, and remove barriers to entry and promotion. The end result is a more diverse, effective, and engaged workforce – better positioned to serve the nation's diverse citizens and thrive in fulfilling a shared public service mission.

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