Anatomy of Change:

How Inclusive Cultures Evolve

CATALYST

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The Catalyst Research Center for Equity in Business Leadership examines and documents workforce demographics and their impact on employees, companies, communities, and society. In particular, the Center identifies how women's underrepresentation affects corporate governance and executive teams, and it explores how diverse leadership contributes to business success. By verifying gaps in representation and creating results-oriented solutions, the Center's findings and recommendations help organizations diversify leadership.

The Catalyst Research Center for Career Pathways exposes root causes of gender gaps from the classroom to the boardroom, conducting research that sorts myth from fact, identifies the true problems that hold women and other underrepresented groups back from advancement, and provides a solid basis for more effective talent development. The Center's findings allow businesses, media, governments, and individuals to gauge women's progress and develop solutions and action plans to advance women into leadership.

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About Catalyst

Founded in 1962, Catalyst is the leading nonprofit membership organization expanding opportunities for women and business. With offices in the United States, Canada, Europe, and India, and more than 600 members, Catalyst is the trusted resource for research, information, and advice about women at work. Catalyst annually honors exemplary organizational initiatives that promote women's advancement with the Catalyst Award.

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"Men hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they can't communicate; they can't communicate because they are separated from each other."[1]

—Martin Luther King Jr.

Too often, the types of conversations that are so vital to creating inclusive workplaces just don't happen. Why? Quite simply, those are hard conversations to have, and research suggests most of us aren't skilled at having them.[2] Take Eric's case.[3]

Eric is a young professional who is deeply concerned about racism and racial inequity both at work and in society at large. Acting out of his desire to understand and address these issues, he visits a local book store in his neighborhood. He's in search of a new and widely acclaimed book called *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan*—a sociological account of the modern-day impact of the notorious Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

When Eric arrives at the store to buy the book, he's approached by an African American sales clerk who offers to help him. Even knowing his own good intentions, Eric immediately grows anxious at the thought of saying the book title out loud. "Klansville U.S.A.," he mutters, his words barely audible. Eric grows increasingly self-conscious as he becomes preoccupied with what the clerk might be thinking of him. It can't be good, he surmises, as he tries to imagine the scenario from the clerk's perspective. Here is a white man asking for a book about one of the most violent and racist organizations in U.S. history. Eric is sure the clerk can be thinking only the worst. After checking the database, the clerk comes up empty and asks Eric for the spelling of the title. Eric's quiet agony is prolonged. "It's... 'Klansville,' spelled with a 'K,'" he says, almost choking on the words. He is convinced the title's KKK reference is now unmistakable and that the clerk is surely casting him as racist.

The clerk matter-of-factly tells him that the book is in stock and points to where Eric can find it. But now Eric is worried that everyone in the store who sees him with the book is also passing judgment. As he approaches the check-out line with the book tucked under his arm, it dawns on him that many of the cashiers are also African American. The risk of negative judgment now seems way too high, and hurriedly, he drops the book and exits the store.

A week later, Eric is at the gym reading a copy of *Klansville*—recently purchased online—while using the treadmill. He is sure the book cover is well concealed but then someone on the adjacent treadmill—who just happens to be African American—asks him what he's reading. The familiar discomfort Eric felt at the book store returns.

Eric's true story highlights a very real dilemma that impedes progress in achieving equity and inclusion in the workplace and beyond. If Eric was so uncomfortable about having to speak about race with an African American stranger—someone he would not likely meet again—imagine what he would feel like speaking about it with an African American co-worker—someone he had to see every work day.

All too often, white and non-white coworkers shy away from conversations about racial inequity in the workplace, just as women and men colleagues avoid conversations about gender equity. These trends are problematic. If there is no candid dialogue about racial and gender inequity—from the perspectives of all stakeholders, white and non-white, women and men—research suggests there is little hope of bridging our differences and building intergroup alliances to right these inequities.[4]

In this report, we tell the story of Rockwell Automation's North American Sales division and the central role that dialogue between whites and non-whites as well as between women and men is playing as the division works to evolve its culture into a more equitable and inclusive one.

What You'll Learn in this Report

Without an inclusive culture, companies cannot benefit from the diversity of their talent. But creating that type of culture is not an easy undertaking. To learn how companies can make strides, we took a "bright spots"[5] approach in this study, which investigates early but promising results of a culture-change strategy adopted by Rockwell Automation, to identify potential success factors. Whether you're a line leader, a diversity and inclusion practitioner, a talent management professional, or just someone who wants to be an agent of change, this report offers insights about critical milestones or guideposts to look for. Whatever approach your organization is taking, the study suggests leading indicators to consider when assessing progress towards inclusion, including:

1. Critical dialogue
2. Commitment to action

> **Leading indicators to consider when assessing progress towards inclusion include 1) critical dialogue and 2) commitment to action.**

A Closer Look at the Numbers

In *Calling All White Men: Can Training Help Create Inclusive Workplaces?*, the third report in Catalyst's *Engaging Men* research series,[6] we examined the impact of a critical component of Rockwell Automation's culture change strategy: leadership development programs explicitly targeted to its sales division's mostly white-male people managers. That study found that after attending these programs:

- Participants' coworkers said that the workplace was more civil; the perceived

incidents of negative gossip declined by as much as 39% in some work groups.
- Participants reported that the extent to which they performed five behaviors vital to inclusion increased significantly.
- Participants' coworkers noticed these changes, too. Specifically, they noticed an increase in participants' habit of inquiring across differences and critical thinking about the experiences of different demographic groups.

In this study, we look more closely at these numbers to examine what they mean in real, everyday terms. We consider questions such as: Did the statistical changes on the five inclusion-critical behaviors, as found in our previous study, translate into real and practical change in the climate on the ground?

To find answers, we conducted in-depth focus groups[7] to examine 1) whether Rockwell Automation employees were, in fact, experiencing a more inclusive work culture and, if so, 2) how this evolution is occurring. Their responses revealed:

- A consensus among study participants that the culture in Rockwell Automation's North American Sales Division had become more inclusive.
- That dialogue was an important milestone in Rockwell Automation's cultural evolution.
- That dialogue also helped to create conditions for committing to action— another key culture-change milestone.

The present study corroborated earlier research findings,[8] which revealed initial quantitative evidence of a culture shift that began to occur after Rockwell Automation's senior leaders participated in two leadership development programs:

- White Men's Caucuses
- White Men and Allies Learning Labs

How did this culture change occur? The current study suggests that new, more open conversations were helping to transform the culture. Rockwell Automation's sales division had succeeded in creating a cadre of leaders who were beginning to bridge the divides that keep whites and non-whites, women and men from talking and working together to create inclusive workplaces.

ROCKWELL AUTOMATION'S APPROACH: A LOOK INSIDE

More than 700 Rockwell Automation managers—more than 200 in its North American Field Sales organization and 500 across other parts of the organization, including some who participated in this study—attended leadership development labs conducted by White Men as Full Diversity Partners (WMFDP). The focus of the labs was to facilitate supportive partnerships both among white men as well as between white men and other groups in the leadership and creation of inclusive workplaces.

LAB FEATURES

Immersion: Participants assemble away from work for an extended period of time, ranging anywhere from a half day to three-and-a-half days.

Leadership Skills Focus: Participants develop skills related to leading and partnering with colleagues to create more inclusive work environments.

Experiential: Participants share intense experiences that encourage self-reflection and questioning of personal assumptions and beliefs.

Commitment to New Behaviors: Participants leave having identified and committed to practicing new habits.

LAB OUTCOMES

Critical Thinking About Social Groups: Taking a critical and reflective view of one's own frame of reference and asking questions about why social hierarchies persist.

Taking Responsibility for Being Inclusive: Rather than expecting others to change, focusing on how one's own behavior can contribute to inclusion.

Inquiring Across Differences: Exploring experiences that may be different from one's own.

Empathic Listening: Listening with the goal of perspective-taking.

Addressing Difficult/Emotionally Charged Issues: Directly addressing rather than avoiding points of conflict.

After attending the labs, managers also participated in skill-building summits, which allowed them to practice and support each other in honing the skills they had been introduced to earlier in the labs.

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To reach a critical mass of employees and support the intensive work done with managers, Rockwell Automation also engaged WMFDP to reach more than 2,700 employees throughout the organization with abbreviated one-day versions of the learning labs that had initially been targeted to managers. Managers who had attended the comprehensive three-day labs were always engaged in these shortened one-day labs targeted to non-managerial staff. In doing so, Rockwell Automation created opportunities for senior staff to role model inclusion skills and helped ensure that a common understanding of issues and commitment to inclusion was reached across all ranks of the organization. All of these formal learning opportunities continue to be complemented by a range of more informal learning practices and programs such as "lunch and learn" sessions, inclusion awareness-raising events, and scenario trainings, which were developed from real-life situations experienced by Rockwell Automation employees and where dialogue skills are practiced.

A Cultural Evolution: From Closed and Exclusive to Open and Inclusive

Focus group participants[9] agreed that Rockwell Automation's North American Sales division is moving from a climate that is white-male centered, risk-averse, and exclusive to one that's more open and inclusive and where differences are appreciated.

"I feel [the culture] has changed…[It's changed in terms of] diversity and inclusion, openness and acceptance. The willingness to discuss [things] has increased."

—Sam

"I've seen a ton of change…Looking at the company and the sales organization, the behavior that was the norm [then] is very different than today. It was more exclusive back then, an old boy network and now, there's a tremendous difference…."

—Jeff

White women and women and men of color also felt the culture had changed. When we asked if participants perceived that the culture had become less inclusive, stayed the same, or become more inclusive, one woman said:

"The leadership team…[has] a strong style… and [they were] asking me to lead like them. That is not me. Leadership now accepts that I don't have to lead the way that they lead. I get the same result, though I go about it a different way."

—Sheryl

There were even reports that the new inclusive behavioral norms were being practiced not only internally but with external stakeholders, too. Several focus group participants described how interactions with distributors and customers had changed:

"[The client was making] off-color jokes, and my manager pulled it right back in. ...He felt very confident and comfortable about pulling that conversation back in without offending the customer or the distributor."

—Elisa

"[There was an instance where] front-line employees...squelched a conversation that was happening and they supported each other and said this is not where we want to go. They cut it off."

—Peter

Culture Change Milestone #1: Critical Dialogue

Most participants agreed that the culture was more inclusive; specifically, that employees' different experiences, perspectives and backgrounds were now being valued rather than being glossed over or ignored. But exactly what was contributing to these perceptions of increasing inclusivity? What makes a culture more inclusive? To find out, we asked focus group participants about the most palpable changes in the ways in which colleagues were relating to each other in the sales division. There was a consensus that colleagues were engaging in very different kinds of conversations about diversity and inclusion.

Rather than having close-ended discussions and debates about their different backgrounds and experiences, focus group participants agreed that the quality of the conversations occurring between leaders and their direct reports had changed. Although they may not all have been familiar with the terminology, the new kinds of conversations that were occurring sounded a lot like what experts call "critical dialogue"—a very open-ended, non-judgmental conversation that has been shown to be effective in bringing people from different backgrounds together.[10]

The following comments are illustrative of the changes white male focus group participants reported relative to such dialogue:

"We could now have these conversations, and it would not change the way you were treated in the workplace (in a negative way)...."

—Tom

"I sat down with a black man in my office, had the longest discussion about discrimination, what affected his life and mine, and I never would have had a conversation like that before. It was a great way to have that conversation with him."

—Michael

White women and women of color—not just white men—also reported engaging in more dialogue than they had before. One woman commented on how much easier it was to raise and address issues of inequity and exclusion.

"…[There was] a male [in my group] being invited to lunch, but not the female, so I had a conversation with the female. It bothers her. I have noticed it. My awareness changed, and I felt I could address it. She thanked me for having the discussion. The male managers never even thought of it. They have committed to doing something different in the future. They were appreciative, too."

—Taryn

Similarly, another woman spoke of having a new freedom to her express herself without fear of reprisal or negative judgment:

"For me there is a tremendous freedom now to say what I think. All of us have talked about trying not to rock the boat, not be singled out. I feel a burden lifted. If I am saying something that sounds feminist, that's OK. If I say something in a meeting to someone, it's because I want to raise their awareness of it. Before I would not have said anything. I was never trying to take on the entire establishment, and now I feel like I can say whatever I want and that it's coming from a good place, and that's tremendously freeing."

—Susan

All of these comments and descriptions bear the hallmark characteristics of critical dialogue—the parties involved did not fear reprisal or judgment, and there is a feeling of freedom to engage in self-disclosure.[11] Differences in perspectives and experiences are validated rather than minimized.

Some participants reported that the dialogue was not just confined to Rockwell Automation's organizational boundaries, but had begun to affect the company's clients and distributors, too. As Jeff explains:

> "[Our clients and distributors are] really close partners, more so than in other industries. And we have our leadership having conversations with those leaders about the journey we're on. A lot of our managers are having discussions— saying, 'this is the most impactful thing I've done here.' And they are like, 'really, why?' And that takes it outside of Rockwell Automation— [there are] ripple effects."
>
> —Jeff

Keep the Dialogue Going

How did Rockwell Automation sustain and amplify the skill of dialogue? Two factors were critical: 1) equipping a critical mass of employees with dialogic skills and 2) providing plenty of opportunity for employees to practice and hone their new-found skills.

Reaching Critical Mass

Some focus group participants believed that enabling a critical mass of employees to learn dialogic skills was a success factor in solidifying new norms for communication across difference. Having the support of colleagues—who were also practicing new dialogue skills—helped employees persist even when they felt discomfort or uncertainty about their efficacy in engaging in dialogue.

Imagine you are speaking to a colleague about the issue of legalized board diversity quotas—an issue about which you feel passionate. How would you feel if you were engaged in a debate where another colleague takes a different stance from yours and argues that his or her side or viewpoint is the "right" one?

Now, imagine instead that you are having a discussion about the same topic—there's a back-and-forth exchange, but you feel the goal is to come to some conclusion or decision.

Finally, imagine you are engaged in a dialogue about quotas. You can tell it's a dialogue because the person you are talking to is really focused on understanding your viewpoint. The conversation is open-ended, and each party's point of view is not only expressed, but is explored as a point of learning.

How would you compare the experiences of engaging in debate, discussion, or dialogue? Rather than the negative feelings that often come from being argued with or not being fully heard—common outcomes of engaging in debate and/or discussion—dialogue turns encounters with people who differ from us into positive experiences. In turn, these positive feelings engender empathy, perspective-taking, and a desire for more interaction across difference.[13] If critical dialogue makes interacting with people who differ from us such a positive and compelling experience, it's easy to see why it is essential for creating an inclusive culture.

HOW OTHER COMPANIES ARE ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE

Recognizing their value in bridging divides, a number of organizations have implemented programs to help employees engage in and benefit from critical dialogue.

- RBC's *Diversity Dialogues*[14] is a reciprocal mentoring model that positions mentors and mentees as partners in learning about diversity. The program matches diverse employees with senior leaders and executives from across the organization.

- BP p. l. c's *Global Path to Diversity and Inclusion*[15] Race Summits, which took place in the United States (Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles), were introduced in 2002. The goal of the Summits was to facilitate open dialogue about race and racial issues. By the end of 2003, an estimated 10,000 BP employees reported engaging in conversations about race.

- BP's *Let's Talk* program, which grew out of the Race Summits, was designed to stimulate conversation about race and racism using a mutual mentoring model that brings together pairs of employees (comprising individuals of different races/ethnicities). Pairs are selected to meet at least once a month for six months, and are provided a detailed program guide to facilitate meaningful conversations around racism.

PROMOTING DIALOGUE IN *YOUR* ORGANIZATION

People don't spontaneously engage in critical dialogue; careful facilitation and guidance is needed to ensure success. As you consider the best ways to promote dialogue in your own organization, here are some to tips:

- Do use guided facilitation to help employees learn strategies and techniques to communicate effectively.

- Do help employees from both dominant (e. g. , men and whites in U.S. context) and non-dominant groups (e. g. , women and non-whites in the U.S. context) deal with the psychological effects of anticipating expressions of prejudice.

- Do expose employees to content about power, illegitimacy of the status quo, and the need for social change. but also recognize the needs of dominant group members to explore commonalities and of the motivation of non-dominant group members to discuss power and privilege.[16]

Practice Opportunities

The labs are equipping a growing number of employees with tools to engage in critical dialogue. Rockwell Automation is also providing ample opportunity for employees to maintain and hone these skills. Recognizing that dialogic skills are critical to business performance, Rockwell Automation offers a variety of coaching clinics that provide leaders with easy-to-implement coaching processes and frameworks within which to have the very difficult conversations, and which, if avoided would impede the acceleration of inclusion and business performance.

How Rockwell Automation Laid the Foundation for Dialogue

What enabled this dialogue to occur? At the time of the focus groups, more than 1,500 Rockwell Automation employees had participated in White Men's Caucuses and White Men and Allies Learning Labs developed by WMFDP. Previous Catalyst research suggested that as a result of implementing these labs, Rockwell Automation has succeeded in creating a cadre of employees that were more consistently:

1. Thinking critically about social groups.
2. Taking responsibility for being inclusive—i.e., focusing on self rather than others as the locus of change.
3. Inquiring across differences.

4. Listening empathically.
5. Addressing difficult or emotionally charged issues.

These changes in habits are what seem to have facilitated the dialogues that were becoming more normative in Rockwell Automation's sales division.

Several focus group participants referenced new skills, techniques, and confidence to engage in dialogue. For example, one woman described the technique of stating one's intention when trying to explore a point of difference or an emotionally charged situation:

Other participants referenced the "fishbowl" technique,[17] a strategy that managers were increasingly using to build dialogic skills among their teams—such as active listening and sharing—and to promote collaborative learning about potentially polarizing issues.

Why Dialogue Is so Essential to Inclusion

In many organizations, action is often prioritized over talk. But talk isn't cheap when it comes to inclusion. Without talk—and critical dialogue specifically—organizations have little hope of building inclusive cultures.

Even when we want to reach out to people who differ from us, a host of barriers often prevent us from doing so. For example, Catalyst's research shows while many men want to support their companies' efforts to promote gender equity and inclusion, they are reluctant to engage with women

colleagues to diagnose and address these issues.[18] Too often, concerns about being judged as sexist or being blamed stand in the way. Similarly, studies show that whites are often anxious in interracial interactions because they worry that they'll be seen by non-whites as racist.[19] Ironically, this anxiety only increases the chances that they will, in fact, be perceived as prejudiced.[20]

Notably, the reluctance to engage across difference is not just on the part of dominant groups like men and whites. Women and non-whites are also apprehensive about certain cross-gender and cross-race interactions, respectively. Concerns about discrimination and being stereotyped can often keep women and non-whites from engaging in cross-gender and cross-race interactions.[21]

With concerns being harbored on all sides of the gender and racial boundaries in organizations, building an inclusive climate is a daunting feat. But by transforming cross-gender and cross-race interactions from anxiety-provoking experiences to positive ones, dialogue can help break down the barriers that limit inclusion.[22] When we all learn and continue to practice essential dialogic skills including demonstrating vulnerability, self-disclosing, suspending judgment, inquiring across difference, and exploring conflicts, over time interactions with people from whom we differ become positive and rewarding opportunities to learn and connect. With this positive reinforcement, reaching out to colleagues who differ from us can become habits that slowly shift the work culture into a more inclusive one.

Culture Change Milestone #2: Commitment to Action

By learning and practicing the art of critical dialogue, leaders at Rockwell Automation were beginning to create a climate where employees felt free to share diverse perspectives and to identify inequities and points of conflict. But as satisfying as these experiences were, focus group participants

agreed that they were anxious to see that dialogue result in solution-building and improvements in the retention and advancement of women and people of color.

One focus group participant remarked that while progress had been made, the goal of inclusion would only be fully realized when all groups had access to leadership positions.

"…People need to look at the leadership and say, 'This is who I can be.' The labs have laid the foundation, but until the org chart looks different, then you don't feel like you're part of the group that is being changed and driving the change"
—Dana

Nonetheless, the critical dialogues that were now becoming pervasive within the sales division seemed to have set the stage for working toward the results that participants desired. Dialogue enabled diverse colleagues to reach understandings about points of difference and commonality and to earn others' respect and empathy. For example, several focus group participants—white men and white women and people of color—agreed that there needed to be power-sharing, and that women and non-whites needed to have greater access to leadership positions. Specifically, a number of participants in the white men's focus group commented on the persistence of closed power structures and networks:

"…To come in from the outside and figure out [how] to be a contributor is extremely difficult."
—Tom

"[There's an] old-boy network—there's an inner circle in Milwaukee."
—Peter

Participants from the focus group, including white women and people of color, made similar observations about the patterns inhibiting inclusion:

"[We] need to see more sponsorship from white men for people who don't look like them."
—Taryn

With common understandings of the problems that stand in the way of inclusion, which was gained through critical dialogue, Rockwell Automation achieved another milestone in the change process: commitment to action.[23] Once Rockwell Automation employees acquired critical, inter-group dialogue skills—and could truly connect across differences with their colleagues[24]—they were increasingly motivated by their shared commitment to inclusion to forge alliances to address the problems and points of conflict they'd been uncovering using their dialogic skills.

The growing commitment to action was evidenced by the increasing engagement of Rockwell Automation employees—at all ranks—in both formal and informal communities of practice (CoPs) to drive the culture of inclusion. Examples of informal communities include sharing of best practices among existing workgroups. More formal CoPs at Rockwell Automation include:

- **The Way Forward Team:** In existence for eight years and re-launched with a new charter in 2010, this team's goal is to increase employee engagement globally; to improve Rockwell Automation's employee engagement index; and to implement top enterprise, business, regional, or functional priorities. The team comprises senior leaders from all functions and selects projects to engage other key leadership stakeholders in identifying and working on the most impactful programs to address employee feedback. Team members support all employees and managers on removing organizational barriers that may impact employee job satisfaction.

- **Inclusion Change Teams:** Launched in 2009 in Rockwell Automation's North American Sales organization, these teams now exist across the organization

and assist the organization's leadership in identifying ways to improve upon and address inclusion issues. Teams comprise employees at various levels from Rockwell Automation's sales districts in the U.S. and Canada. These teams are not diversity advisory councils; rather they recommend actions and solutions to drive culture change that creates awareness and behavior change in the dominant groups. Specifically, team members:

- Serve as advocates for all employees in the field and work with leaders to continue to create awareness of dominant privilege.
- Lead the overall inclusion journey for the North America sales organization, including internal and external events.
- Create tools and programs to support leaders in the organization's inclusion efforts.
- Benchmark with other Inclusion Change teams across the organization to share best practices and examine missed opportunities

- **Annual Summit for Courageous Inclusion and Engagement Leaders:** Launched in 2007, the summit began with 45 leaders from around the world. Today, summit attendance has grown to more than 130 participants—senior and early- to mid-level leaders—committed to the goal of effecting sustainable change. It serves as a powerful venue where leaders role model the changes they want to see and brings together employees from Rockwell Automation's The Way Forward Team, the Employee Inclusion Teams, and representatives from Rockwell Automation's affinity groups. The focus of the most recent summit was, "What does it take to build a culture of inclusion?" Here, participants wrestled with identifying the next step for Rockwell Automation on its journey and shared tools and practices for ensuring the organization moves to action.

As one focus-group participant explained, alliances like the Annual Courageous Leaders

CONSIDER THIS: FOSTERING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Communities of Practice (CoPs) serve as groups where supporters of change can share successes and new learning with one another. They also provide social reinforcement and legitimacy that make them a tool organizations should not overlook when laying the groundwork for sustainable change.[25]

- How is learning about diversity and inclusion practices being shared and leveraged in your organization?

- How can CoPs be used to amplify inclusive efforts in your organization?

Summit, which have been forming and growing in participation across the organization, have been critical to fueling the cultural evolution happening at Rockwell Automation. Although learning labs had been instrumental in helping employees gain critical dialogue skills, engaging in dialogue alone was not sufficient to sustain the cultural changes that participants were reporting.

"It wasn't just the labs. It was action planning and best practices and engagement seminars and the Inclusion Council, [among others]. Hearts and minds are involved, and we're building traction, building traction."
—Jan

Signs of Progress, But Still Work to Do

The majority of what participants shared pointed to evidence of culture change, but they are realistic that there is still much work to do to achieve the inclusive work culture that will enable Rockwell Automation to leverage the diversity of its talent pool.

As one employee commented, there is still work to be done to gain the commitment of some Rockwell Automation leaders:

"Some leaders have taken it to heart. Others you don't see one iota of change in their behavior. There's a spectrum."

—Taryn

The work yet to be done is not all focused on white male leaders. As another employee described, there are also employees of color who view the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts as a zero-sum game, where one group's gain is another group's loss.

"I had two negative experiences, two people who were not white male. They were bragging about how they are on everyone's list (to be promoted) and I'm not as a white male.... Happened twice."

—Tim

According to one employee, some employees outside of the U.S. and Canada felt excluded by the dialogue and alliance-building activities, which they saw as focused on issues that were largely North American.

"[I was] in a session, and a man from Asia stood up and said, 'I'm sick of this People of Color, and I'm not a POC…and I'm the wrong sex. Where are the Asians in our management team.... This is BS. '. The facilitator accepted it, understood it, and couldn't argue with it, and that type of feedback will be passed on."

—Tom

A few participants commented that managers' developing skills were not always having the intended effects, and that some women and people of color expressed a desire to return to the status quo. As one woman noted:

"…Particularly in the early stages, a lot of the females felt undue pressure to represent their gender. A district manager… [was] trying to present a PowerPoint in their office [about

diversity and inclusion], and women were like, 'Would you please stop?' One woman described it as having a mammogram in front of the whole room. Would you stop talking about it? Now that there is more awareness, there are people who are more receptive. There is potential for backlash; [it's] a fine line."

—Susan

Others felt that Rockwell Automation still had far to go to before it could claim that it had created a culture of inclusion. According to one man, the proof of success would be the company's ability to advance and retain the talent of women and people of color:

"We don't yet have the numbers and that's the proof…."

—Jeff

Lessons Learned From Rockwell Automation's Journey

Much can be learned from Rockwell Automation's approach and early successes at building a more inclusive culture, including some simple yet often overlooked lessons that could make all the difference in whether or not culture change efforts really gain traction in an organization.

Lesson #1: Get People Talking First

Starting with its North American Sales division, Rockwell Automation has embarked on a journey to build a more inclusive organization. It began with the simple yet often overlooked notion that, in order to drive culture change, people first and foremost have to get talking. Leaders, mostly white males, needed to begin talking to each other and with their direct reports about how their gender and racial/ethnic identities have shaped their unique experiences in the workplace and beyond. Good intentions are not enough, and Rockwell Automation's leadership

understood that these dialogues would not happen spontaneously. Leaders and their reports needed real, tangible tools to begin engaging in critical dialogue with each other.

By focusing on dialogue across gender and racial groups as a key culture-change milestone, Rockwell Automation may have avoided some problems that halt too many inclusion initiatives in their tracks, including:

- Discomfort with interacting and engaging across difference.
- Lack of buy-in and shared understanding—at at all levels of the organization—about what the inclusion challenges are.
- Poor understanding of the issues that limit inclusion.
- Responsibility for diagnosing and leading inclusion efforts carried disproportionately by women and racial/ethnic minority groups.
- Resistance and non-compliance.
- Lack of motivation—diversity and inclusion fatigue.

As more and more employees became skilled at critical dialogue, discomfort with interacting across differences lessened as this experience became increasingly rewarding for white men, white women, and people of color. Out of more effective dialogues also came shared understandings of the inclusion issues, including points of difference and common interests that could be worked on and achieved together. Realizing common goals among white men and women and people of color, through dialogue, employees of all backgrounds—not just women and people of color—were more engaged and motivated to make change, together. The foundation for successful partnerships and alliances to create more inclusive work norms, practices, and policies were established.

Lesson #2: Formalize Structures to Capitalize on Dialogue and Facilitate Action

There are signs that Rockwell Automation's focus on solidly building this foundation is paying off. Experts suggest that, when done right, dialogue leads to action. This action is happening informally as managers are applying what they've learned in their teams and sharing best practices. But it is instructive that Rockwell Automation is not leaving this next phase of the change process to chance. By formalizing CoPs to capitalize on and amplify the gains won through dialogue, Rockwell Automation is putting formal structures—establishing CoPs—in place to ensure that that momentum isn't lost.

Lesson #3: Don't Let Action Eclipse Dialogue

Maintain the foundation. Although focused on action planning and implementation of new practices, a key strategy of the CoPs is a continued honing of dialogue skills so that foundation for change remains strong. And by applying dialogic skills to the action planning and implementation phases of the change process, there is increased likelihood of shared buy-in and commitment to enacting solutions.

Rockwell Automation employees are cautiously optimistic about what lies ahead and the continued evolution of the culture. When asked about the likelihood of a return to the older, more exclusive culture, many felt that that Rockwell Automation had come too far to retreat. As one participant remarked, "The toothpaste is out of the tube."

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ROCKWELL AUTOMATION'S JOURNEY

- Lesson #1: Get People Talking First

- Lesson #2: Formalize Structures to Capitalize on Dialogue and Facilitate Action

- Lesson #3: Don't Let Action Eclipse Dialogue

Appendix

Two focus groups were moderated by the same three facilitators. One focus group comprised 10 white men who had participated in WMFDP's learning labs from one to four years prior to being interviewed. The second focus group included eight white women and people of color who had participated in WMFDP labs two or fewer years prior to being interviewed. There were three primary points of discussion in each focus group:

1. Whether participants perceived the culture at Rockwell Automation had become more inclusive, less inclusive, or had remained the same.
2. What interactions or behaviors were contributing to their perceptions of change or stasis in the work culture.
3. How the labs and any other practices or programs had contributed to any observed culture changes or to maintaining the status quo.

The three facilitators independently reviewed the notes both she and the other facilitators had taken during the focus groups. After completing their independent reviews, all three facilitators then subsequently met to discuss and summarize the kinds of responses that were given to each of the three main discussion points. There was very strong agreement across the facilitators on the nature of participant responses from each focus group. Then, using the scissor-and-sort technique,[26] one of the facilitators selected quotes that represented each type of response related to the three main discussion points. These exemplar quotes were used to support the interpretative analyses provided in this report.

Endnotes

1. Quote from Dr. King's (1958) Stride toward Freedom: The Montgomery as reproduced in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.: Symbol of the Movement, January 1957-December 1958*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) .

2. Biren (Ratnesh) Nagda, "Breaking Barriers, Crossing Borders, Building Bridges: Communication Processes in Intergroup Dialogues," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 62, no. 3 (2006): p. 553-576.

3. All of the names of individuals referenced or quoted in this report have been changed to protect their anonymity.

4. Biren (Ratnesh) A. Nagda, Patricia Gurin, Nicholas Sorensen, Chloe Gurin-Sands, and Shardae M. Osuna, "From Separate Corners to Dialogue and Action," *Race and Social Problems*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March 2009): p. 45-55.

5. Chip Heath and Dan Heath, *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (Crown Publishing Group, 2010).

6. Jeanine Prime, Heather Foust-Cummings, Elizabeth R. Salib and Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, *Calling All White Men: Can Training Help Build Inclusive Workplaces?* (Catalyst, 2012).

7. See the appendix for a description of the methodology.

8. Jeanine Prime, Heather Foust-Cummings, Elizabeth R. Salib and Corinne A. Moss-Racusin, *Calling All White Men: Can Training Help Build Inclusive Workplaces?* (Catalyst, 2012).

9. These were not the same employees who were surveyed in a prior study. Focus group participants had attended a leadership development learning lab, facilitated by White Men as Full Diversity Partners, anywhere from one to four years prior to current study.

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17. For more information about the fishbowl technique, see Lea Kacen, "Intergroup Bridging Using the Dynamic Circles Exercise (DCE)," *Simulation and Gaming*, vol., no. 29 (March 1998): p. 88-100.

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