

# Advancing Inclusion in the Spatial Industry

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# Overview

- What is an inclusive environment?
- Current state of DEI support (if it exists)
- How DEI support should look in work/career/industry spaces
- Commitment to growth
  - In order to advance inclusion in the spatial industry



# Inclusive environments are...

- ...spaces where people **feel comfortable** sharing their thoughts/feelings and bringing up issues
- ...places where leadership and general team **feel comfortable** *listening to and supporting people when issues arise*
  - Support = active listening, conversations, and commitments to actionable change
- ...where people feel comfortable **getting uncomfortable**
- ... **people feel (psychologically) safe**



# How do you build an inclusive environment?

- Intentionally prioritize DEI work
- Make it a part of the “DNA” of work/career/industry
- Make it a given, not an option



# Current state of affairs



# First a look at what currently exists (IF it exists)

- Repeated DEI training once year
  - Sometimes an online module (sometimes the same module!)
  - Video watching + quiz afterwards
  - All hands discussing it
  - Etc
- Dedicated staff member or team that is in charge of “DEI things”
- Dedicated DEI Committee that is in charge of “DEI things”



# When DEI support looks like that...

- It is only discussed loudly once a year (or quarterly)
- and/or the responsibility is held by only one or a few people
  - Typically no one in “positions of power” (ie, CEO, executive leadership, organizational board, etc)



# When DEI work looks like that...

- Temporally: It is easy to forget, dismiss, and not prioritize
- Staff member/committee: DEI “solutions” held by one or few people in an organization that are not in positions of power means that good plans can be made and discussed often, but that doesn’t mean that there will be systemic support to actually bring about change





# DEI work often is not prioritized

- In toxic environments, this can be intentional
- In other environments, sometimes it is due to constantly rushing and balancing work, and prioritizing what is considered “priority work”
- But this is a problem:
  - People who are not in in the majority (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, women, and other historically marginalized communities) **notice either way**



# Toxic or deprioritized = not inclusive environments

People who are not in the majority (BIPOC, LGBTQ+, women, and other historically marginalized communities) **notice either way**

- Notice **no support** / not listened to
- **No actionable change from the org** makes people feel **powerless**
- **Feeling powerless** to change very clear issues also is a parallel to life outside of work for so many people, **so this also adds on to existing microaggressions and/or traumas**



**Not prioritizing DEI  
work is NOT inclusive**



# These are therefore environments where...

- ...people **do not** feel comfortable sharing their thoughts/feelings and bringing up issues
- ...leadership and general team **does not** feel comfortable *listening to and supporting people when issues arise*
  - **Not** supporting = active listening, conversations, and commitments to actionable change
- ...people **do not** feel comfortable **getting uncomfortable**
- ... **people do not feel safe**



**When people do not  
feel safe (and fight to  
feel safe and are  
unheard): **they leave****



**So, what needs to change to have an  
inclusive (and therefore **safe**)  
**career/work/industry** environment?**



# DEI work needs to be same “priority” as other work

Example:

- Finance team: Budget considerations are thought about all year round
  - One person or team may be experts in financial stuff, but executive team, managers, and general staff all “share the load” in following budgetary decisions or bringing issues to light when they come up
- I.e., goals for big projects are thought about and supported all year round
- Think of DEI work as a “project” and ensure there is clear support across the organization
  - This may require conversations about infrastructure shifts to help support it

# How to prioritize DEI to build a more inclusive environ?



## 1. Infrastructure change

- Have clear support from leadership through consistent and transparent discussions that lead to actionable change → systemic changes
- Center DEI conversations in a workshop environment - not video training, not “lecture” environment
  - Workshops facilitate conversations across all team members and help everyone hear each other; empathize; understand
- Ensure there are actionable change outcomes from DEI conversations (workshop convos or concern convos); also make these transparent; assign milestones/deadlines





**Now the harder but  
most important thing to  
commit to...**

# How to prioritize DEI to build a more inclusive environ?



## 2. Commitment to feeling uncomfortable, commitment to personal growth

- Infrastructure changes will not happen without a commitment to feeling **uncomfortable**, working through understanding issues and working on deeply understanding (sometimes this can be uncomfortable! Sometimes this is confronting something internal)
- **Personal growth is a part of building a more inclusive environment**



# Personal growth - why?

- All of us have biases, as well as just different lived experiences and not being aware of how others feel, what things happen to others that do not affect us directly etc
- DEI work is not like other aspects of work - DEI work is really personal, it is deeply personal
  - DEI work relates to EVERYTHING - it relates to all aspects of a person's life
    - Identity

# How to prioritize DEI to build a more inclusive environ?



## 2. Commitment to feeling uncomfortable, commitment to personal growth

- It is very important that people in positions of power take this seriously and are loud and clear about their commitment to feeling uncomfortable and growing
- **Leadership has the power to deny change** (regardless of how well supported DEI plans are)



# How to prioritize DEI in the industry?

## We all have power in this room

- We all are people who collectively have power, and there are also people in this room who are in positions of power
- If every **spatial conference and community committed to prioritizing DEI work**, infrastructure change, and personal growth (feeling uncomfortable and growing through it), where could we be in just a few years?
- **Academic institutions, small and large well known private companies**



# Lead by example

- **If organizations/companies are transparent about actionable commitments...**
  - Shows how committed we collectively are to building an inclusive environment.
  - When environments are inclusive, people choose to interact more, say more, do more, and connect more
  - All of the above builds a safe environment
  - Safe environments = community
  - **Inclusivity = community building**



**... and that is how we  
can advance inclusion  
in our industry**



**Questions?**