The Inclusion Breakthrough: Unleashing the Real Power of Diversity

Miller, Frederick A. & Katz, Judith H.

2002 Berrett-Koehler Punlishers, Inc.: San Francisco

Reviewed by Ross Tartell, Ph.D.

IN THE MID-1980S I saw a singing group of about 20 bright and talented Yale undergraduates. In the group were people of color, women and possibly three or four U.S. born white males. At the time I was struck by the fact that here was a very capable and talented group of people, many of whom would have to make their way through a much more homogenous world. As a practitioner in the field, I have spent years thinking about and trying a range of answers to the question of diversity and inclusion. With *The Inclusion Break-through* I am much closer to understanding how to create a culture of inclusion that is supportive, productive, and fully aligned into the organization's strategy.

Think of the years that have been devoted first to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action, then to diversity and most recently to inclusion. Through each of these related efforts there have been successes and failures. This book gives the framework that learns from the past and provides the tools that can lead to future success.

Miller and Katz draw on their years of experience in the field as practitioners and as part of the Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group to build a compelling case for leveraging diversity and building a climate of inclusion. Their case is simple; the world is changing, demographics are changing and if organizations are to thrive, they must be a talent magnet – attracting talented people to the organi-

> **Policies and practices are rarely an exciting topic. But the discussion here was provocative and the depth of detail in the chapter easily broadened my thinking. Again the discussion not only presented a wide range of policies to think about, as well as the message they convey, but Miller and Katz also list "the new baseline," which begins to outline performance indicators for the development of the policies supportive of inclusion.**

zation and then enabling them to succeed in ways that lead to high levels of performance. The authors argue that unleashing these resources will require a radical paradigm shift from "Diversity in a Box" – a loose assortment of programs in an initiative peripheral to the strategy, processes and culture of the organization – to "An Inclusion Breakthrough." – where leveraging diversity and inclusion

is integrated with the organization's strategic goals and becomes a way of life.

I am unsure whether this call for radical change is warranted. Many of the skills and processes the authors outline already exist in organizations. However, I am very sure that the recommendations and perspectives they propose are critical to creating a work environment where people want and are able to contribute, where people are respected, and where they work for intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivational reasons.

So how do the authors tell their story? The book has three major sections that outline the need for a culture of inclusion, the elements of the Inclusion Breakthrough and the change process. This is the first book I have read that elegantly integrates the three.

Part 1, "The Need for an Inclusion Breakthrough," sets the stage for the authors' argument for the radical change and the alignment of inclusion as a core enabling strategy of any organization. "Diversity in a Box" is shown to stifle the capacity of those in power to perform, as well as those in "out groups." Organizational success and survival requires the utilization of all the talent in the organization.

This first section delineates the initial steps critical to the creation of a level playing field, and then the necessity of raising the level of performance on that field. It uses a wide range of short vignettes and stories to depict the

impact of "Diversity in a Box." Miller and Katz argue that programs that are not inextricably linked to organizational strategy and processes will have very little impact on the organization's performance.

I found Miller and Katz's discussion in Part 2 of the elements of an inclusion breakthrough to be a clear and concise discussion of the components necessary for the creation of an inclusive environment. Their visual model of the "Elements of an Inclusion Breakthrough Cycle" is a wonderful open systems framework that enables the reader to understand what the authors think is important, how the parts link together and the implications of the cycle on customers, organizational performance and society. Their discussion of the five key elements of the cycle (New Competencies, Enabling Policies and Practices, Leveraging a Diverse Workforce, Community and Social Responsibility, and Enhanced Value to the Marketplace) is almost a cookbook of the factors to address, how those factors should be approached and what success might look like.

For example, the authors' discussion of the need for new competencies is clear and compelling. They discuss how an organization did their initial assessment regarding diversity, opportunities to grow and how people add value. After describing the assessment, Miller and Katz describe what the organization did. They discuss 11 inclusive

behaviors and how they might play out in different organizations and the authors differentiate between organizational and individual competencies. Finally, they give real life examples of performance indicators.

Policies and practices are rarely an exciting topic. But the discussion here was provocative and the depth of detail in the chapter easily broadened my thinking. Again the discussion not only presented a wide range of policies to think about, as well as the message they convey, but Miller and Katz also list "the new baseline," which begins to outline performance indicators for the development of the policies supportive of inclusion.

The discussion of a new baseline is an area that might have been more fully explored. Performance indicators and project related activities are covered in the remaining chapters, but a more in-depth discussion in each section on what measures indicate success or failure in the effort would be useful.

Part 3 "Creating an Inclusion Breakthrough" is easily one of the better sections I have reviewed on creating and then institutionalizing change. Anyone in the field will recognize the first three phases as an in-depth description of the change model of unfreezing, transition and refreezing. The authors add a fourth section "Leveraging Learning and Challenging the Status Quo," which is a critical extension that reflects a world of white water.

They go on to outline four essential building blocks of effective change: "Leverage – finding points of opportunity that enhance strengths and maximize payoff; Linkage – ensuring there is a total payoff exceeding the sum of the parts. Leadership – equipping formal and informal leaders with the necessary skills and holding them accountable. Last on the list is Learning – the process of continuous discovery as a foundational component to the change process. As with almost every part of the book, the gems are easily understood and imminently practical.

The Inclusion Breakthrough is an outstanding book from professionals in our field. It is special because Miller and Katz share their collective experience; clearly highlighting successes and failures and drawing for the reader the most likely pathway to creating a success in this very important area. This is not a book that was written to market services or impress professionals. It was written to instruct and enable Organization Development practitioners and leaders of organizations to succeed in this very important area.

Occasionally there is a book that provides a perspective that not only triggers insight, but also provides concrete direction that enables the reader to plan and take those critical first steps to create a high performance organization. *The Inclusion Breakthrough* by Frederick A. Miller and Judith H. Katz is one of those rare books. ■