

The POWER of INCLUSION

Unlock the Potential and Productivity
of Your Workforce



MICHAEL C. HYTER • JUDITH L. TURNOCK

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By Michael C. Hyter and Judith L. Turnock

Synopsis

This book lays out a pragmatic framework for eliminating the widespread waste of human capital in many corporations: develop the capabilities of all employees. Concrete strategies, developed over years of experience as corporate consultants, provide a clear path to inclusive organizational policies and procedures, strategic leadership, and managerial practices.

Overview

Enormous amounts of potential are wasted every day in most corporations. This waste must be eliminated if growth and prosperity are to continue in today's global economy. The waste we are referring to is a waste in human capital—the most important resource companies have. Why is this happening with relatively little attention or concern? Because most of us have been socialized to operate from the belief that “some people have it, and some don't.” Hence, the widespread tendencies for corporate managers to focus their attention on those select few they deem talented. With no intention to be exclusionary, they shower these “high potentials” with development opportunities and support as they learn and then step back and say, “We were right!” At the same time that these select few prove their talent, the vast majority of other employees are less successful and less productive. Oftentimes, these results serve to reinforce the implicit assumption among managers and leaders that their organization is a meritocracy where “the best naturally rise to the top.”

This book challenges the underlying belief that only some employees have the potential to be highly productive contributors. Instead, we propose an inclusive model of development and corresponding management practices based on a radically different paradigm:

In most companies, who succeeds and who doesn't is the result of an observable, repeatable process of development rather than innate ability. Through an inclusive approach to development that provides all employees with the opportunities usually reserved for a select few, organizations maximize potential and productivity.

This paradigm is based on our experience as managers and consultants, where we have repeatedly observed that those people who succeed actually acquired their talent because of the development attention they received. For example, they were given stretch assignments that allowed them to develop skills critical to the company's business objectives, and during those assignments they were supported with guidance and encouragement. Their successes—and even their failures—were rewarded with more stretch assignments along with more encouragement and guidance.

It is important to emphasize that we are not equating employee development with advancement. It is neither realistic nor manageable for a business to have each employee striving to reach the top of the organizational ladder. Rather, we are talking about the type of development that would maximize the number of engaged, valued employees who have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary for them to contribute to organizational success.

At first glance this may seem like common sense; however, there are subtle, often unconscious tendencies that perpetuate the “sort and select” practices that exist in most organizations. To begin with, it is a common human tendency for people to prefer others who are most like themselves in important ways. In addition, there may be implicit stereotypes associated with certain groups that contribute to differential treatment. This helps explain the fact that in the corporate world, where most managers have traditionally been white men, women and especially people of color find themselves at a particular disadvantage.

We began our journey to this insight and its solution thirty years ago with a mission to help women and people of color develop their potential in order to succeed in corporate America. As coaches and consultants, we challenged women and people of color to take personal responsibility for understanding the corporate workplace and becoming valued contributors. For the most part, our focus was on how to manage oneself within the existing environment rather than how to challenge its obstacles.

This individualized approach, though efficacious as a personal mindset, came up against subtle exclusionary tendencies built into leadership, management, and human resources practices that perpetuated unequal opportunity. Looking at the wider organization, we also realized that those patterns of exclusion were not limited to women and people of color; many employees suffered similar neglect. The treatment of women and people of color, it turns out, is merely a symptom of a more pervasive condition limiting both individual and company performance.

This is a book about the inclusion of all employees rather than a diversity treatise limited to women and people of color. However, we maintain that the treatment of these two groups serves as a barometer indicating the extent to which an organization is truly committed to building and sustaining an inclusive environment for everyone. Hence, while this book focuses on company policies and management practices that affect all employees, we will note the special challenges that women and people of color continue to face whenever they are relevant to the discussion.

A culture of inclusion that unlocks everyone's potential provides a solution to the current business reality of wasted talent and productivity. Ultimately, by ensuring the development of all, we maximize productivity, profitability, and long-term business success. The need for this paradigm shift is underscored by the increasing demographic diversity within the U.S. as well as the fact that most companies today operate in a global economy where adopting inclusive management practices is a critical requirement—both in terms of employee productivity and increasing market share. Indeed, our work with companies outside the U.S. has convinced us that patterns of exclusion and preference that limit potential are universal and require the same types of interventions that we outline in this book.

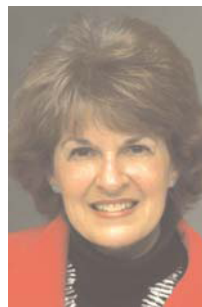
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Hyter's work with executive leaders in Fortune 1000 companies has resulted in organization-wide diversity and development initiatives that have enhanced the firms' business objectives. He has also helped those firms expand that diversity into their subsidiaries in Europe. Hyter has published articles in the *2003 Handbook of Business Strategy* and *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, and speaks widely on the topics of diversity and development to groups such as Linkage, the Conference Board, the Minority Corporate Council Association, Executive Leadership Council, and ASTD.



Judith L. Turnock is an attorney, experienced executive coach, and inclusion expert. She is the founder and president of Hunter Management Group (HMG), where her work has included designing and performing capacity-building and board development projects for private, governmental, and non-governmental entities; preparing public relations materials for corporations; developing

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