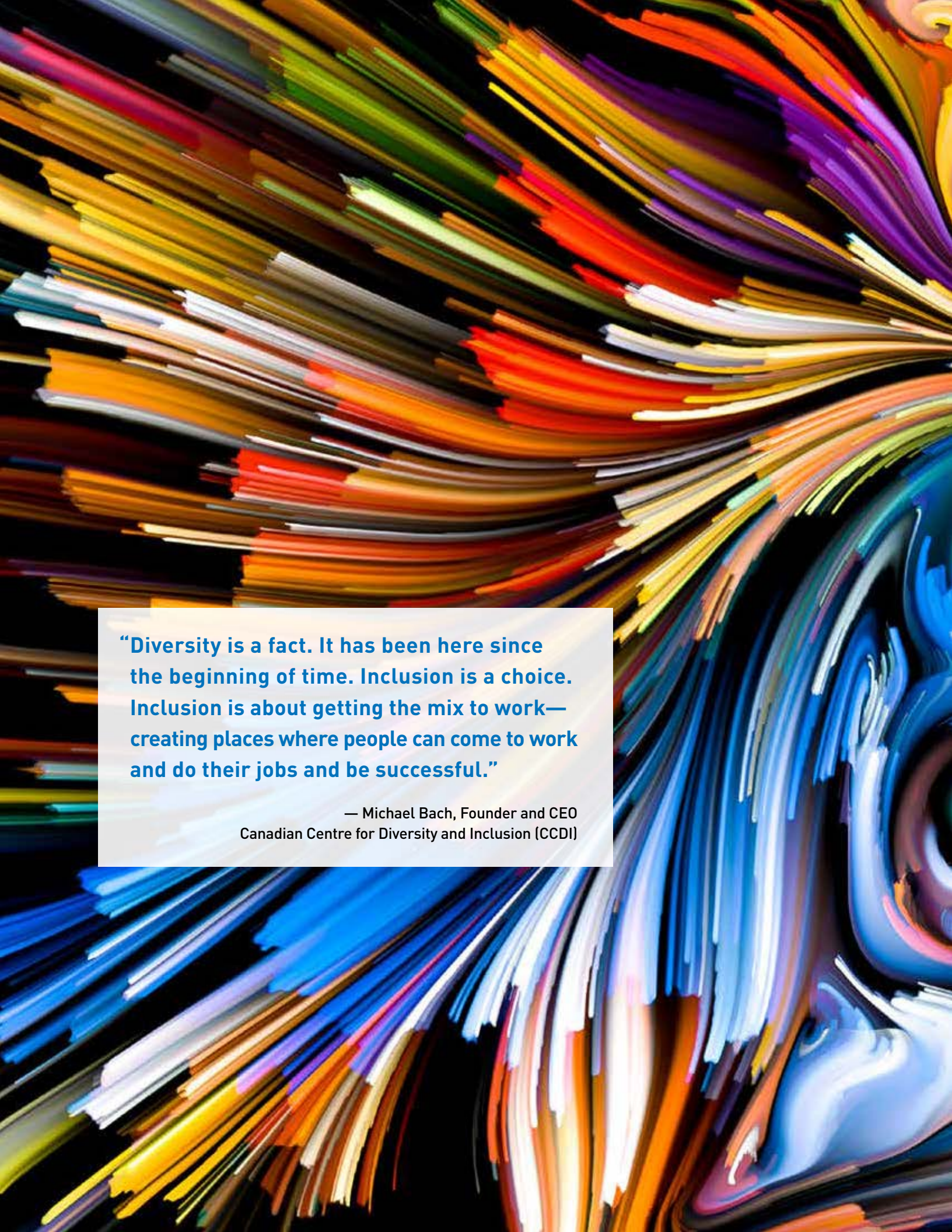


The Role of Leaders in
Building Inclusive Workplaces



An Executive White Paper by: CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network

Written by Workplace Safety & Prevention Services in collaboration with Heather West, Fresh Communications | October 2018



“Diversity is a fact. It has been here since the beginning of time. Inclusion is a choice. Inclusion is about getting the mix to work—creating places where people can come to work and do their jobs and be successful.”

— Michael Bach, Founder and CEO
Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)



Table of Contents

3	Introduction
4	The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion
6	Leadership Commitment
10	Overview of Roundtable Discussion
12	Participant Spotlight – Modern Niagara
16	Conclusion
18	Appendix A: Roundtable Participants
19	Appendix B: References

This isn't a new topic. Since Trudeau's now famous response of "Because it's 2015" to a journalist's question about the importance of a gender balanced cabinet, the conversation has changed and efforts to be more inclusive have intensified.





Introduction

When Michael Bach asked the female attendees of the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network if they had ever been in a meeting where they made a point that was completely glossed over, only to have a male colleague repeat the same point and receive a response, too many hands went up. Bach pointed out that an inclusive leader would call this out and say, “Yeah, that’s what she just said.”

Clearly, by the show of hands, we’re not there yet, but Bach and his team are committed to changing this reality. He is founder and CEO of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI), a national charity focused on educating Canadians about the value of diversity and inclusion and moving the employer mindset from one of compliance to engagement.

This isn’t a new topic. Since Trudeau’s now famous response of “Because it’s 2015” to a journalist’s question about the importance of a gender balanced cabinet, the conversation has changed and efforts to be more inclusive have intensified.

Bach noted that, until now, a lot of energy and resources have been dedicated to increasing representation, and stressed that inclusion is what we should be focusing on. “Diversity is a fact. It has been here since the beginning of time. Inclusion is a choice. Inclusion is about getting the mix to work—creating places where people can come to work and do their jobs and be successful.”

In the report *Diversity Dividend: Canada’s Global Advantage*,¹ published by the Centre for International Governance Innovation, one executive respondent noted, “*For the last 20 years, we have been doing the same kinds of things: muscling through to get numbers for diversity, but we haven’t changed the infrastructure or environment that we are operating in. The challenge is to change the way we think and the way we work, if we want to truly see the benefits of diversity.*”

Participants of the roundtable held in May attended this event because they see this too, and recognize that they must be the first to change the way they think and act to create a truly inclusive workplace.

In this white paper, we share highlights of the presentation, talk about the business case for diversity and inclusion, and examine the role that leaders must play to change attitudes and behaviours. We also look at the steps Modern Niagara has taken to become more intentional about diversity and inclusion in their workplace.

The Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion

While the business case for diversity and inclusion will differ for every organization, there are three common denominators.

- 1. People** – Every organization needs to attract, retain and promote the right people and needs them to be productive and engaged.
- 2. Customers** – Whether you serve other businesses or the public, every organization has a customer.
- 3. Brand** – How you're known in the market and whether you're seen to be an inclusive employer will have an impact on your ability to hire talent. Young people Google. They will make decisions to work for organizations based on inclusion. If they can't see themselves in your organization, they will not apply.

In order to remain relevant and competitive, businesses must pay attention to this issue. "The numbers paint the business case. They tell us why this is an imperative, and it is an imperative," says Bach.

For the first time, we have five generations in the workplace. The Canadian birth rate is in decline and our immigration numbers will continue to grow.

In the *Diversity Dividend*, authors cite that "In approximately 20 years, immigration will account for all net growth in Canada's population and workforce (Statistics Canada 2017). With an aging population and increased pressure on healthcare, pensions and other social services, a dynamic workforce will be an essential element in maintaining Canada's standard of living and remaining internationally competitive."

In addition to demographic shifts in Canada, many research initiatives have shown the strong correlation between diversity and inclusion and performance. In their report, *Waiter, is that Inclusion in my Soup?*²² Deloitte and The Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission found that when employees think their organization is highly committed to, and supportive of, diversity, and they feel highly included, they are 80% more likely to agree that they work in a high-performing organization.

Women between the ages of **15 to 64** make up nearly **50%** of the working population* in




Racialized individuals make up approximately



of the Canadian population*

 **1 in 7** CANADIANS aged 15 years and older reported a disability*

 Canada's Aboriginal population increased by more than **20%** between 2006 and 2011 compared with **5.2%** for the non-Aboriginal population*

* Source: Statistics Canada

“In approximately 20 years, immigration will account for all net growth in Canada’s population and workforce.”

— Statistics Canada

In *Diversity Matters*,³ McKinsey also looked at the connection between the level of diversity and organizational performance. *“It stands to reason—and has been demonstrated in other studies, as we indicate—that more diverse companies are better able to win top talent, and improve their customer orientation, employee satisfaction, and decision-making, leading to a virtuous cycle of increasing returns. That, in turn, suggests that diversity beyond gender and ethnicity/race (such as diversity in age and sexual orientation), as well as diversity of experience (such as a global mindset and cultural fluency), are also likely to bring some level of competitive advantage for firms that are able to attract and retain such diverse talent.”*

Bach referred attendees to *Developing the Ironclad Business Case for Diversity and Inclusion*⁴ on the CCDI website to help them create a case for diversity and inclusion in their workplaces. In the introduction to the document, he says that every leader, manager and employee must be able to understand and articulate why diversity, inclusion, human rights and equity are important to the organization. “If they can’t articulate why, they won’t support the how.”



Leadership Commitment

When Trudeau challenged us to get with the times, he took a bold stand and made it clear that his government was committed to inclusivity and that his cabinet must represent all Canadians.

Organizational leaders must do the same.


Every recommendation outlined in the *Diversity Dividend* places the onus on leaders to rethink the practices and processes in their organizations that work against inclusion. The recommendation related to culture states, *“Inclusive organizations have leaders who put a high value on fairness, merit and equitable treatment. They prioritize inclusion over diversity, values over numbers and they address myths. Leaders need to integrate diversity and inclusion into an organization’s identity and core operations.”*

When asked what misperceptions or myths cloud this issue, Bach points to a belief that integrating diversity and inclusion into a business is expensive. He counters that it isn’t about spending a lot of money, and stresses that it is about committing resources in human capital and understanding bias and how it impacts the workplace.


The impact of leader bias was discussed in the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network white paper, *The Perfect Day*.⁵ *“There are many ways leaders impose assumptions and biases on those around them. In addition to organizational design and policies and procedures, employees take cultural cues from other factors, such as the things that get attention, the allocation of resources, the attitudes and behaviours that are rewarded, how leaders behave generally, as well as how they react in a crisis.”*



“Inclusive organizations have leaders who put a high value on fairness, merit and equitable treatment. They prioritize inclusion over diversity, values over numbers and they address myths.”¹ — Diversity Dividend



An inclusive leader genuinely believes in the importance of diversity and inclusion.



Bach says the other big myth that hampers inclusivity is meritocracy. “Merit is a myth. If there is bias in the process somewhere, it falls apart—it’s no longer merit based.”

In her book, *Against Meritocracy: Culture, power and myths of mobility*,⁶ Dr. Jo Littler challenges the belief held by many people around the world that they live in a “fair” society and that with hard work and determination, they can achieve what they want, despite social status. She argues this is a myth because evidence shows that people are disadvantaged by many factors, including gender, ethnicity and financial wealth.

Many leaders at the CEO roundtable were there because they want to change this. The question for them isn’t why, it’s how. And that was the purpose of the session—to help them understand what it means to be an inclusive leader.

In his presentation, Bach spoke highly of the work Deloitte is doing in this arena. He used their report *The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership*⁷ as a springboard for the conversation about how leaders can amplify their efforts.

Deloitte drew from their interactions with over 1,000 global leaders and examined 15 of them in depth. They also surveyed more than 1,500 employees on their perception of inclusion to identify the following traits:



1. Commitment

An inclusive leader genuinely believes in the importance of diversity and inclusion. They understand the business case and it resonates with their personal values. They recognize their own privilege and care deeply about creating an inclusive society that is fair and equitable.



2. Courage

Inclusive leaders acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses and they act with humility. They are open to talking about imperfections and surround themselves with people who fill the gaps around their weaknesses. They are not threatened by dissenting views and they stand up to inequity.



3. Cognizance of bias

They have a deep understanding of their own experience and unconscious biases. They are astute at self-regulation and do a lot of work on themselves. They pay special attention to fair play and actively work on their biases to ensure they do not compromise fairness and equity in any way.

Eliminating Gender Bias in Symphony Orchestras

In 1970, only 5% of musicians in symphony orchestras were women. In 1997, that number climbed to 25% and today it's closer to 30%. Blind auditions are the reason for the change. Now musicians audition from behind a screen for a jury. Some orchestras use this tactic for the full selection process and others use it only for the preliminary round of auditions. In either case, the curtain has had a major impact on the number of women being selected.⁸



4. Curiosity

These leaders possess a genuine curiosity about people. They are open-minded about hearing opinions that differ from their own. They adapt well to instability and uncertainty and flex to different cultural norms and personality types. They don't have to agree with what is being said and they encourage open discussion to gather different perspectives.



5. Cultural intelligence

Inclusive leaders recognize that not everyone sees the world through the same cultural framework. They surround themselves with difference and crave knowledge. They empower individuals with different cultural experiences to challenge the status quo, think about problems differently and speak out.



6. Collaboration

They understand that successful collaboration hinges not only on inviting diverse perspectives but on people feeling valued for their perspectives. They encourage autonomy and take a disciplined approach to team composition and decision-making.

Overview of Roundtable Discussion

After the presentation, participants broke away into table groups to discuss the topic, sharing answers to questions about how diversity is influencing their workplace and industry, steps they've taken toward being more inclusive, the results of their efforts, and the barriers they've encountered along the way.

There were several participants who expressed surprise that this was still a topic of conversation. Their feeling was that this has been around for so long and we've come so far, it should just be part of running a business effectively.

However, while there was widespread agreement that diversity and inclusion must be a priority, few spoke of formalized plans and programs in their workplaces. And several noted that while work is being done to close gaps, more needs to happen.

A few participants shared steps they've taken in their workplaces, including:

- taking trips to experience different cultures
- focusing diversity and inclusion efforts in the areas of science and technology
- outsourcing to other countries
- making accommodations for the religious and cultural requirements of a diverse employee base
- providing appropriate training, such as *Respect in the Workplace*⁹
- creating team structures that represent multiracial, multinational perspectives

In addition, the following ideas were shared as possible next steps:

- review the Six Signature Traits and evaluate whether they exist in the workplace
- review policies and procedures to see where biases exist
- survey employees using a third party to assess the current state; make sure to use data and share results
- articulate commitment to diversity and inclusion as a core value
- allow employees to speak out without repercussion and listen to new ideas

The importance of taking a holistic approach to employee relationship management—looking at individual strengths and weaknesses—was also mentioned. In tandem with that, **it is essential to have** honest, one-on-one conversations about goals and aspirations.





Several participants expressed surprise that this was still a topic of conversation...



Some participants talked about barriers, including:

- limited time and money to invest in this issue
- employees feeling a lack of courage to speak out
- biases that persist in processes and practices
- lack of applications from under-represented groups

When asked what the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network might do to advance this discussion, some interesting ideas were shared. It was suggested that the Network could share best practices and case studies of leaders' journeys—highlighting successes and lessons learned. One participant mentioned a possible connection with International Gender Champions, a leadership network that brings together female and male decision-makers to break down gender barriers. Another raised the possibility that the Network might support some sort of certification process and mentor other leaders on building capacity.

The presentation spurred a lot of questions and ideas around what needs to happen to focus and intensify efforts. There was also acknowledgement that leaders play a vital role and that they need to continue the conversation in their workplaces to ensure that inclusion is, in fact, on their corporate radar and that they are building accountability and visibility of their efforts. They also have to build the trust to make this a reality, and to do that, they must be self-aware and open to regular evaluations to ensure that they are addressing their own mistakes and personal biases.

Participant Spotlight – Modern Niagara

Modern Niagara has been in business for more than 50 years. It offers mechanical and electrical building services and controls, as well as an expansive resource base, project management and financial stability to its customers. It employs more than 1,500 people and is constantly growing in all ways, including volume of business, services offered, number of employees and skills represented.



**MODERN
NIAGARA**

Design. Build. Service.

Modern Niagara prides itself on its belief that talent has no colour, gender or age. While the organization has always been committed to this belief, the leadership team decided that they needed to formalize their activities. Earlier this year, they introduced a Diversity and Inclusion Committee to help them be more purposeful in their efforts. We talked to Brad McAninch, CEO and Erin Oliver, Vice President, Employee Health & Safety, about their journey so far.



Brad McAninch
CEO
Modern Niagara



Erin Oliver
Vice President, Employee Health & Safety
Modern Niagara

Q: Why are you committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace?

It's absolutely the right thing to do and it's consistent with our value system. We build important facilities across Canada—places where laws are made, people are cared for, and where families and friends gather and spend time together. Communities across Canada experience the buildings we are part of creating, and we want our workforce to reflect those communities.

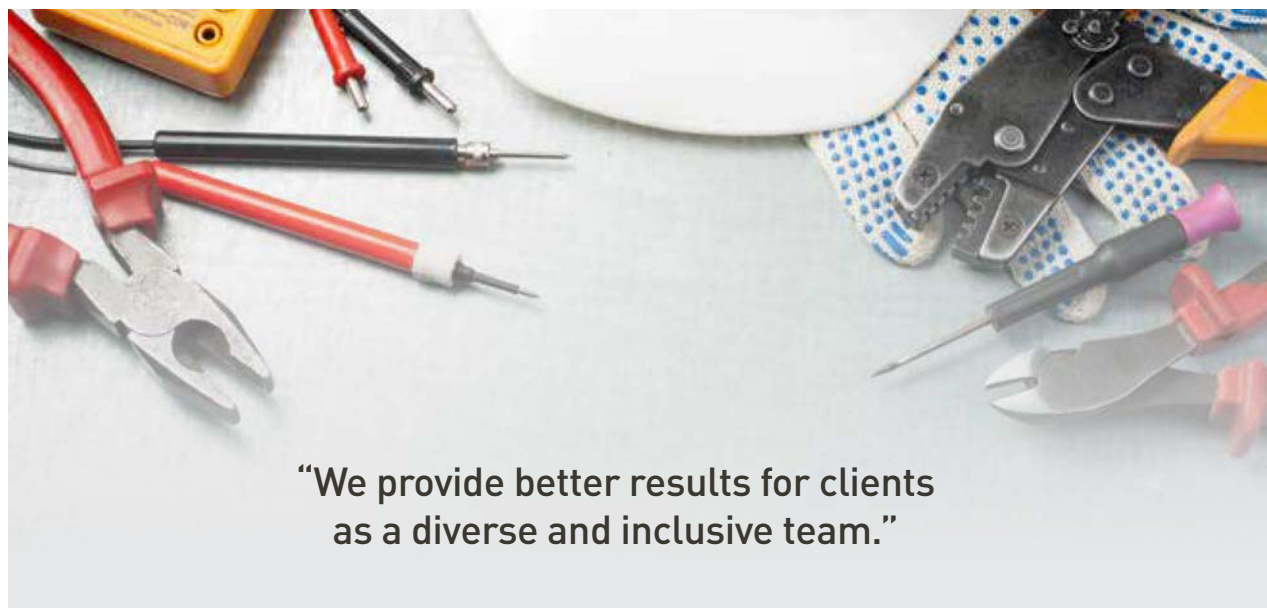
Q: When and why did you start to focus more intentionally on diversity and inclusion?

We identified diversity and inclusion as a priority at the beginning of this year. We completed a survey for the G7 Women's Forum, which revealed that we were meeting or exceeding representation of the current Canadian population with respect to diversity in the construction sector, but that there were also some areas for improvement. They gave us recommendations, such as increasing our diversity in the top echelons of our leadership as well as improving the inclusiveness for certain of our diverse populations. Doing this is challenging, especially in construction, but the committee members have rolled up their sleeves and will make sure that we continue to measure and meet our targets in these areas.



“We want to do a better job of creating a diverse and inclusive workplace and we want to take a leadership role—not just within Modern Niagara, but also the construction community at large.”

—Modern Niagara



Q: What is the business case for this focus at Modern Niagara?

The Committee has set out a business case in support of diversity and inclusion, and the executive team supports it. We're going to have a shortage of skilled trade workers in the near future and we need to tap into all available talented resources. We also know that when people of different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives come together to solve a problem, the result is stronger than it would be if a single type of person addressed that same problem. We provide better results for clients as a diverse and inclusive team.

Q: Have you bumped into any challenges along the way?

Like many sectors, construction industry culture can be resistant to change. However, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee is focused on creating a structure that addresses culture and focuses on the long-term benefits for all concerned. This is something that must remain a priority. We are having conversations with grassroots groups ranging from unions to high schools, and we're engaging young people from all backgrounds to look at construction as a career opportunity.

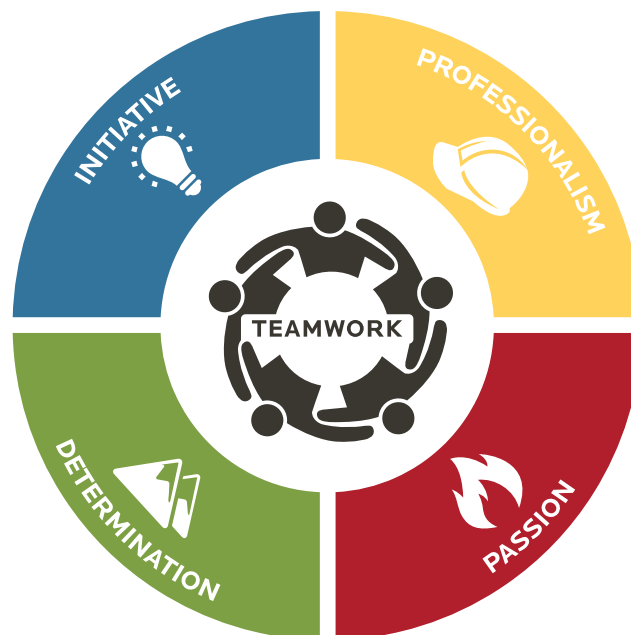
Q: As you bring a more diverse employee base into the organization, are there differences in the management of those relationships?

Our department of Employee Performance and Success encompasses talent management, health and safety, sustainability, and professional development. We take a one-on-one approach in helping people. We ask them who they are and who they want to be in their career. It's an honest conversation about strengths and weaknesses, and we will continue to have these conversations as our workforce becomes more diverse. We also want to ensure that we are being inclusive and offering the supports and structures needed to make everyone feel that they belong at Modern Niagara.

Q: Is your focus on diversity and inclusion building your brand as an employer of choice?

Yes, it's part of our value system and it has gone a long way for us. Indeed, our core values are at the heart of all we do, and that is also true for our work on diversity and inclusion.

OUR CORE VALUES



Conclusion

Bach says few employers have a strategy or a business case for diversity and inclusion. They plod along doing a lot of things without the data to support why they are doing them or whether they are actually having an impact.

“Every employer, despite size and industry, should understand and articulate the business case for diversity and inclusion in their workplace. They should understand what they are trying to do and why. It doesn’t have to be a massive undertaking. It’s just a matter of conducting a self-assessment, talking to people, collecting demographics, and measuring against reliable sources to establish where the organization is now and where it needs to go. They should identify issues and establish metrics for success, and then repeat the same process every three years or so.”

— Michael Bach, Founder and CEO
Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)

There are many tools and resources out there to begin this journey, but as a first step, there are two tools that leaders can use to assess where they are today. The first, the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI®) is a tool used to build intercultural competence and help organizations achieve their diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes.

The other, the Maturity Meter, a CCDI tool, is based on the *Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks*.¹⁰ It is a multi-part tool that evaluates the maturity of an organization’s diversity and inclusion strategy.

Bach closed the session by stating that leaders need to shift from being reactive to proactive. He challenged those in the room to move from simply being tolerant of differences to making people feel they are truly respected, valued members of the team.





About the CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network

The CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network is a distinguished group of leaders who share a commitment to building sustainable businesses and communities.

This dynamic collaboration offers fertile ground for exchanging knowledge and ideas in the pursuit of performance excellence. In addition to optimizing their own organizational health and safety performance and return-on-investment, members:

- Build brand value and enhance corporate reputation
- Influence provincial and national health and safety policies and ensure business requirements are represented in critical conversations
- Contribute to the transformation of health and safety culture in Ontario

Join us for the next roundtable event

The next CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network Roundtable is taking place April 30, 2019. Don't miss this opportunity to network with other executives and engage in a facilitated discussion on building and sustaining your organizational culture.

Watch for more information coming soon.

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Appendix A: Roundtable Participants

The following organizations participated in the May 2018 CEO Health + Safety Leadership Network Roundtable:

Bay Communications & Marketing	Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers
Bruce Power	Pilot Performance Resources Management Inc.
Campbell Institute	Public Service Commission
Canadian Centre for Diversity & Inclusion	Public Service Health & Safety Association
Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety	Respect in the Workplace
Chemistry Industry Association of Canada	Responsible Distribution Canada
Conference Board of Canada	Retail Council of Canada
CSA Group	Rillea Technologies Inc
Fresh Communications	SAFE Work Manitoba
Habitat for Humanity Canada	SafeStart
HASCO Health & Safety Canada	Scott & Associates Inc.
Innovia Partners	Second-Growth WoodWorking
Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc.	Service and Hospitality Safety Association
Landscape Ontario	Siemens
Malmö University, Sweden	Skills Ontario
Minerva Canada	Sturm Consulting
Ministry of Labour	THINK'n Corp.
MIRARCO Mining Innovation	Thomson Reuters
Modern Niagara	Threads of Life
National Safety Council	Workplace Safety & Prevention Services
Nations Fresh Foods	XpertVR
New Zealand Lamb Company	



Appendix B: References

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- ¹⁰ Expert Panelists, O'Mara, Julie, Richter, Alan, Ph.D., *Global Inclusion and Diversity Benchmarks*, The Centre for Global Inclusion, 2017.



Network Members





**“Diversity is a fact.
Inclusion is a choice.”**

— Michael Bach
Founder and CEO, Canadian Centre for
Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI)



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Health and Safety Together

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Workplace Safety & Prevention Services™ is the largest health and safety association in Ontario, responsible for more than 167,000 member firms across the agricultural, industrial/manufacturing and service sectors.

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