

OPTIMIZING
ORGANIZATIONAL
CULTURE

COMPANY
OVERVIEW

2022

Creating More Inclusive &
Equitable Work Environments



IT'S ABOUT
MORE THAN JUST
"CHECKING A BOX."

BUILD EQUITY
& INCLUSION
PRACTICES INTO THE
FOUNDATION OF
YOUR BUSINESS.





Re-imagine

YOUR WORKPLACE

CREATE AN OPTIMAL

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Truly transformative work environments create space where employees at all levels of the business can engage in their work and collaborate with others in authentic, transparent, and open communication. Businesses that prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion demonstrate increased innovation, adaptability, and employee engagement and satisfaction.

More and more businesses today have started the process of bringing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) into their workplace. Despite an intention and desire for change, many organizations struggle to figure out just how to grow that process internally and create lasting, sustainable shifts in their organization.

Often the focus of equity work is placed solely on closing achievement and/or opportunity gaps; increasing diversity metrics at the individual level by providing increased opportunities and transparency.

This is absolutely essential work and thankfully there are many experts helping to address these challenges. Yet individual gains also fail to address the systemic challenges that perpetuate inequities. We must also address culture if we want to disrupt the system.

Integrative Inquiry Consulting is in the business of culture change. **We help develop system conditions that increase an organization's capacity to bring about more equitable outcomes and experiences.**

Our specialty is addressing the interpersonal communication barriers that often inhibit real learning, trust, and growth. We have to be able to talk to others in authentic, transparent, and open ways if we want to get to the heart of the problems.

At each step of the way, we partner with organizations to help them embed and strengthen practices that build healthy organizational cultures. With the information we glean from assessments, we can train leadership and teams to better observe and alter their behaviors, policies, and process to directly impact the culture on a wider scale.

DEI must become a cornerstone of the values and ethos of the organization in order to effect lasting change. This is a huge endeavor, but there is a path you can follow.

Whether you are just starting this journey or have been working on it for years, we can help you look at the big picture, determine what you've accomplished so far and where you need to focus, and plan out next steps.



Examine

CHARACTERISTICS OF
OPTIMAL WORK CULTURE

purpose

the extent to which we connect our work to the larger mission and values of the organization and feel able to contribute our ideas and perspectives towards that vision.

CONTRIBUTOR SAFETY

growth

the extent to which we embrace learning through mistakes, innovation, and opportunities for improvement.

LEARNER SAFETY



Since the beginning of the field of human resource development in the mid 1900s, researchers have been studying what makes ideal work environments. Optimal work cultures prioritize and value their employees. This work traditionally focused on measuring employee “engagement and satisfaction,” but in the last decade an equity lens has been added to the discussion.

agency

the extent to which we feel able to make choices in our roles, raise concerns, and inform decisions that impact the organization when change is needed.

CHALLENGER SAFETY

process

the extent to which we believe in the fairness and transparency of the organization and can see how practices and policies reflect that.

TRANSPARENCY SAFETY

belonging

the extent to which we feel seen, heard, and valued as an individual within an organization and value each other's wellbeing.

INCLUSION SAFETY

High-performing, highly engaged, thriving diverse workforce

When looking at the culture of your workplace it's important to note how the experiences of your identity and the power dynamics present in the organization influence whether all employees feel equally engaged, empowered, and committed. At Integrative Inquiry, we infuse contemporary critical human resource theory, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and psychological safety, to identify five key characteristics of optimal work culture.*



GROWTH

Organizations that are able to effectively respond to change are pioneers of innovation and create work cultures that encourage feedback, curiosity, and flexibility. Growth cultures teach individuals to seek opportunities to improve and acknowledge mistakes which can decrease burnout, stress, and work-related illness. Rather than simply react to changes, this characteristic is about integrating change into the culture itself.

Organizations that have high levels of this characteristic often excel at creativity and are often on the cutting edge of their field. Their ability to evolve and pivot gives them greater flexibility to adapt with changing times, markets, employee needs, and face challenges and mistakes with humility and a commitment to improve.



PURPOSE

Strong organizational cultures have a shared vision and mission, with values and goals that are widely understood and agreed upon by employees. Employees should feel committed to the purpose of the organization and be able to directly see how their work contributes to it. This requires clear messaging, mentorship and guidance at all levels of the organization.

Organizations with high levels of this characteristic often have inspiring, compelling messages that ripple throughout the organization and are shaped by the employees that work there. People are mission-driven in their work and live the company values. There is guidance and support provided for employees at all levels to improve.



AGENCY

Higher instances of employee independence and responsibility have been shown to directly increase engagement and productivity. When individuals feel as though they can directly contribute, impact, and address needs within their teams they are more likely to take on responsibility and leadership.

Organizations with high levels of this characteristic often have highly participatory feedback, collaborative decision-making processes, and clear channels for employees to raise concerns, questions, and ideas. Employees are more likely to advocate for their own needs, client needs, and structural changes.



PROCESS

Companies with clear structures, processes and procedures strengthen their organizational stability and transparency, which increases team efficiency and trust. Employees believe in the intentions and behaviors of leaders and in turn understand how their actions in turn contribute to the work environment.

Organizations with high levels of this characteristic often have clear, consistent, and transparent policies, roles & responsibilities, and company-wide expectations that align with company values. They openly address disparities and candidly work to improve their policies, practices, and procedures that may contribute to them.



BELONGING

Work cultures that are inclusive are relational in nature. They value the input, perspectives, and wellbeing of all members of a team, celebrate and value difference, and prioritize people over product. Inclusive teams have high levels of trust, collaboration and support, rooted in a foundation of community. The work environment is a place where employees feel seen, heard, and valued and can express their authentic selves.

Organizations with high levels of this characteristic often see high retention and employee satisfaction from employees of all backgrounds and identities.

*Further academic validation and resources can be found in our white paper on the subject. www.integrativeinquiryllc.com/approach

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Denison, D. and Mishna, A. (1995). Toward a Theory of Organizational Culture and Effectiveness. *Organization in Science*. Vol. 6(2), 204-223

Clark, T. (2020). *The Four Stages of Psychological Safety: Defining the Path to Inclusion and Innovation*. Berret-Koehler: CA

Maylett, T. *Engagement MAGIC: Five Keys for Engaging People, Leaders, and Organizations*. (2014). Austin: Greenleaf Book Group Press.



“I really appreciate how Integrative Inquiry is willing to meet us where we are and has been so understanding with us throughout the process. In the same way that their work reveals the humanity in all of us, they practice what they preach and are very willing to meet you where you are at, whatever stage of this work you are in.”

*Danny Mejia, Program Specialist,
Maine Boys To Men*

Benefits

Traditional human resource models frequently frame human development as a company commodity and a means to maximize profit, adopting the language of “human capital.” This results in strategies for improvement being structured primarily for cost-benefit analysis.

We believe that the value of employee education, learning and development are not limited to productivity and financial gains, and that there is value in human growth and satisfaction that is immeasurable by those indicators.

That said, there are clear financial and pragmatic advantages for businesses that invest in culture change and it is important to acknowledge the ways in which this process directly benefits the bottom line for businesses. High levels of employee involvement, adaptability, direction, and structure are strong predictors of company growth, innovation, and profit.

In our framework, we believe all forms of human resource development can and should increase:

Employee Interest, Engagement, & Retention.

Optimizing work culture not only attracts great employees to your business, it keeps them engaged, committed, and passionate and are the foundation of healthy thriving company cultures.

Profitability, Productivity, and Sustainability.

Research has shown that effective HR development enhances a business’s profitability, sustainability and market competitiveness and overall increases team effectiveness, productivity, and quality.

Preparation for the Demands of the Future.

Optimal cultures integrate innovations necessary to ensure competitive advantage. Organizations that embrace diversity, a growth mindset, and commitment to change consistently report the most long term success and adaptability.



THERE ARE **THREE PHASES** THAT ORGANIZATIONS MUST ADDRESS IN ORDER TO SUCCESSFULLY TRANSFORM CULTURE:

INVESTIGATE

Internal Equity Assessment | Understand the current challenges and climate of organization

Strategic Planning | Design comprehensive longitudinal plan for implementation

EDUCATE

Training | Learn the key skills, concepts, and practices needed to shift culture

Coaching | Receive direct support to grow and troubleshoot challenges

INTEGRATE

Strategic Interventions | Launch team or departmental initiatives to deal with specific barriers intentionally.

Internal Structure | Execute new company-wide practices, launch internal curriculum, and build the foundation you need to succeed long-term.

We aren't trying to reinvent the wheel.

Some organizations may have progressed through the initial "investigate" phase and may even be already building their leadership bench through trainings. We work with organizations where they are at and are more than happy to review and incorporate any strategic documents and assessments completed prior to our partnership and use that information to inform the next phases.



Investigate

PLANNING FOR EQUITY

To impact DEI initiatives, organizations must begin with an initial analysis process to understand where their strengths and their gaps are inside their company. This is not about compliance requirements, good “scores,” or punitive policies. It is simply a benchmark process to help the company understand what current needs exist within their organization to help design a strategy that is relevant, impactful, and effective.

CONDUCT AN

INTERNAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Even if you’ve started this process already, odds are there are still gaps in your initial analysis. We can work with you to piece together what you have tracked and help identify any key areas to explore to ensure that you are equipped with the information you need to directly impact your culture. **We will work with you where you are at**, building off of the work you have already started and providing complementary tools to form a holistic understanding of your current landscape. For more information and price estimates, see our Internal Equity Assessment Guide.



DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

Analyze diversity and track trends of demographic information about your organization regarding race, gender, ability, religion, orientation, and language.



FOCUS GROUPS

Conduct focus groups by identity, role, or department in order to address barriers and document qualitative feedback.



CULTURE MAP

Use our state-of-the-art online survey to generate an aggregated report highlighting the areas of strength and opportunities to improve in our 5 key culture domains.



POLICY ANALYSIS

Review of hiring, onboarding, exiting processes in place, functionality and use of feedback mechanisms, decision-making processes and professional development and promotional practices.



SET UP FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Once organizations have clear data to indicate the areas of strength and opportunity within their workplace, we can begin to design an approach to the work.

Partnering with the HR, DEI, or leadership committee steering the initiative, we can create documents outlining your vision and next steps.

Keep in mind, strategic plans should always consider:



Results Based Accountability.

Effort alone isn't good enough. Set up your culture change strategy with accountable, measurable targets that will guide your actions.

Longitudinal Design.

Don't just plan for tomorrow. Consider what your 3/5/10 year goals might be in this arena. Focus on benchmark indicators that will help you strive to improve long after the honeymoon is over.

Curricular Threads and Goals.

One-off trainings and external consultants only take you so far. Create a clear curricular plan with your improvements. Which stakeholders need what trainings? Why?

“[Any organization that] hires Integrative Inquiry, would first have an inward understanding of where they are as an organization and culture, and then have a coach and partner to help them with a crucial foundational assessment before they decide to go one way or another.”

*Julia Trujillo
Director of Office of Economic Opportunity
City of Portland, ME*

This work is always ongoing. If you have completed assessments and strategic plans in the past and are ready to re-examine and update your process, it may be helpful to bring in external experts to help with the process.

For organizations with newly formed DEI committees or positions, this work is essential to make sure you are empowering that team to be effective and sustainable.



Educate

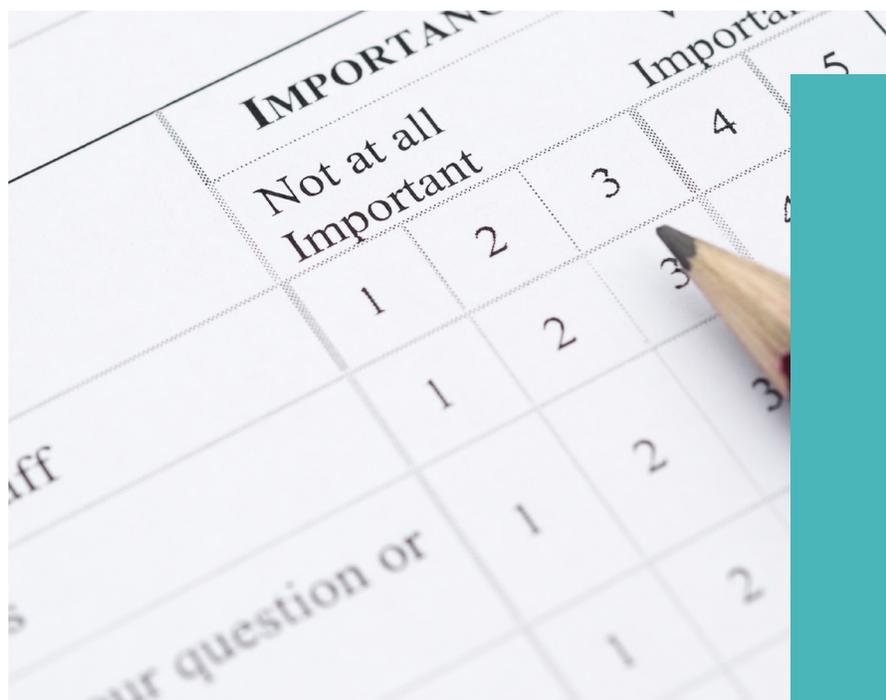
LEADING FOR EQUITY

Training must be relevant and applicable to be impactful. Leaders need to take an active role in the process of culture change, leading the work, not simply reacting to it. Whether in formal positions of power within the organization or spear-heading committees and initiatives, truly transformative leaders accelerate change around them. That requires substantial reflection, learning new concepts, tools, and frameworks for how we work together, as well as gaining practical experience and feedback as the learning continues.

LEVEL SETTING WITH A LEADERSHIP EQUITY & ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICE (LEAP)

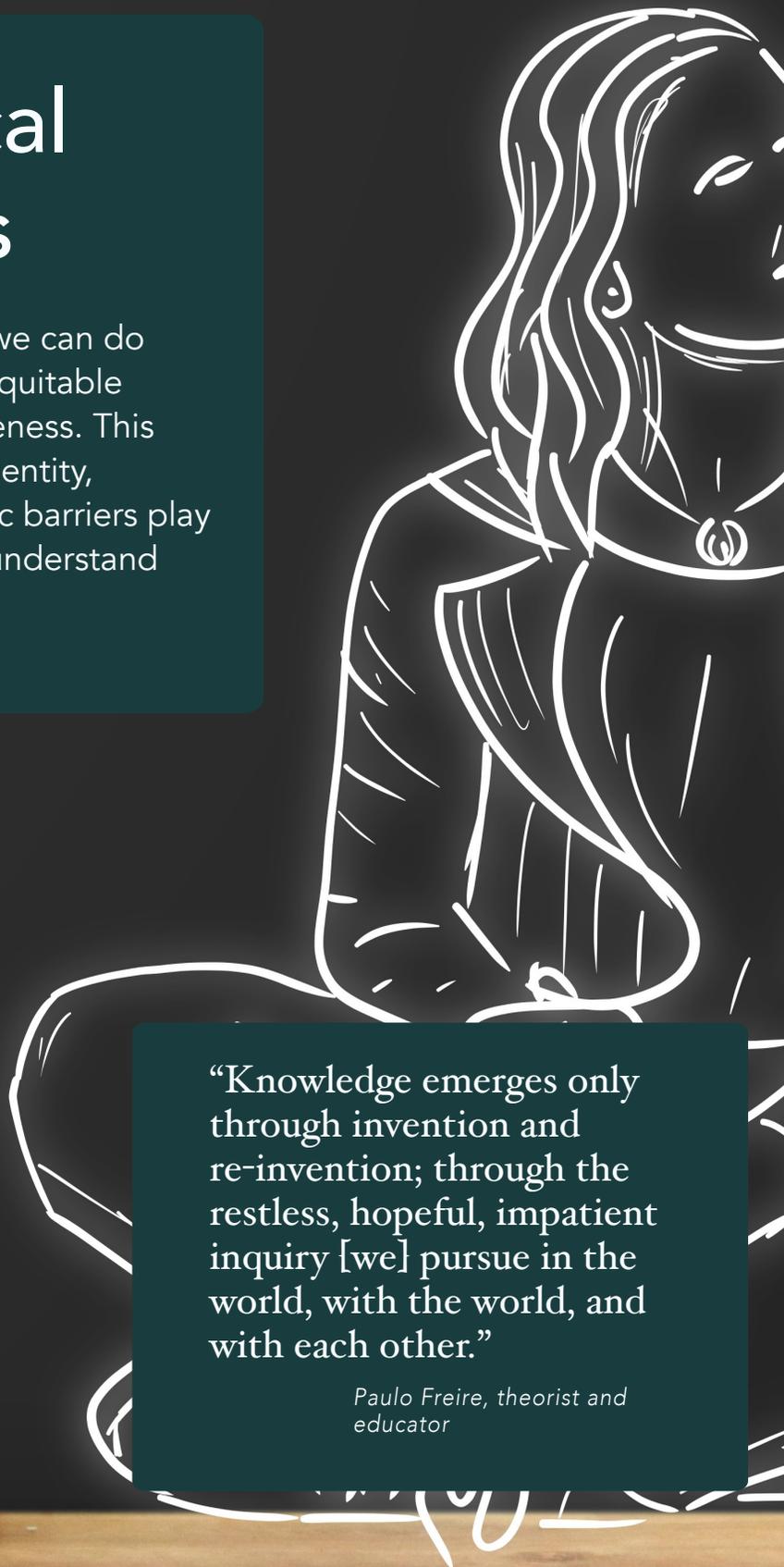
Integrative Inquiry Consulting offers another unique tool designed for leaders looking to better center equity in their work environment.

Our Leadership, Equity, and Accountability Practice (LEAP) programs help leaders reflect on different aspects of their own development in order to intentionally address strengths and areas of opportunity in their own awareness, communication, and behavior. Our courses also help highlight how each individual relates to and addresses the policies and practices within their organization.



Develop Critical Consciousness

As leaders, the most essential thing we can do to create intentional, inclusive, and equitable workspaces is to build our own awareness. This means understanding the role that identity, culture, power dynamics and systemic barriers play in our work environments. We must understand what exists if we want to change it.



“Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention; through the restless, hopeful, impatient inquiry [we] pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.”

Paulo Freire, theorist and educator

LEADERSHIP EQUITY + ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICE

cultivating critical consciousness

01 awareness

understand the ways in which I and others are impacted by and directly impact the world around us.

GROWTH

02 communication

engage others in discussion and dialogue to open up opportunities for change, innovation, and collaboration.

PURPOSE

03 action

improve behaviors in concrete and tangible ways through taking deliberate actions, calling one another "in" around areas of opportunity.

AGENCY

05 system + culture

acknowledge the implicit ways our society reinforces particular values and behaviors and articulate a response that is inclusive of diverse perspectives.

BELONGING

04 policy + practice

Identify, address, and advocate for changes at the institutional/organizational level to create policies and practices that further equity and inclusion.

PROCESS



LEARNING THROUGH

TRAININGS & WORKSHOPS

When it is clear what skills are needed on your team, it's time to get started with workshops and trainings specifically designed to address your team's barriers. The goal of training is to help participants develop new tools and techniques, breakdown barriers, and expand their awareness of themselves and others.

Our courses are designed to address the five characteristics of optimal teams, but they also work to develop different skill levels, as participants progress through internal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic change.

LEAP courses are tailored to each client and can be expanded to long skill-building courses or shortened to introductory level classes. It's up to how much you want to get out of the program.

When we begin a contract we determine curriculum based on:

- The number of participants
- The experience and backgrounds of participants regarding the material
- The location (in person or virtual)
- The time commitment and availability of participants
- Intended outcomes (awareness, skill development, behavior change) from the course
- Specific sector or industry concerns

Once we have determined the scope of work we create a customized program based on the courses listed below.

One of the core tenets of Integrative Inquiry is authentic collaboration. We strongly value partnerships and the richness of experience that others bring in to this work.

Though internally we have a variety of expertise and experience on our own team, we are also more than happy to collaborate with outside parties in order to generate the best experience and service for our clients.

Don't waste company money, energy, and time on one-off sessions from a myriad of sources. The most important things to consider about trainings and workshops are the sequence, flow, and intention. Why this topic and this trainer? How does it address the expressed needs of your team? How does it connect and build off the previous learning you've done? We can help you think more intentionally about how to structure these to maximize impact.

LEAP FOUNDATIONS	6 hours of content in three stand alone workshops.
LEAP APPRENTICE COURSE	20 hour course designed for action planning and practice.
LEAP MASTER COURSE	40 hour course designed for practical action, coaching, and practice.

We have two tracks for our LEAP programs:

Courageous Dialogue: Facilitation in Conflict | for HR professionals, culture brokers, educators, or managers who wish to better facilitate dialogues and conversations around equity in their teams. It focuses on increasing psychological safety and addressing power dynamics to better engage all voices.

Liberating Structures: Policies & Processes for Equity | This Master Class is for executive leadership and managers who wish to implement better policies and practices to improve equity in their institutions. It focuses on the structural components of equity within an organization, and provides time to workshop tangible actions for each component.

For descriptions of modules and price estimates, look for our LEAP Course Guide.

SUPPORT FROM

COACHING & DEVELOPMENT

Training without application is ineffective at best. One of the primary challenges to embedding DEI initiatives and culture change is that companies often stop after running a workshop or two, and don't make the commitment to practice the skills being introduced. But this is where the magic happens.

Leaders often do not fully understand their impact on their organization's culture and the importance of taking action in this space to acknowledge their role in improving it. Coaching provides perspective when it comes to understanding our own development journey, whether as individuals or collectively as a leadership team. By cultivating inclusive skill building practices, we can become socially responsible leaders who are invested in creating positive and productive work environments for all our employees.

 <p>Developmental Coaching One-on-One sessions with leaders to hone their own practices and approach within an organization.</p>	 <p>Team Coaching Group sessions with leaders to reflect on dynamics, to process initiative successes and challenges, and to adjust goals as needed.</p>	 <p>Situational Coaching Scheduled as-needed sessions to trouble shoot specific barriers to the work and problem-solve together.</p>
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“I think one of the things [Integrative Inquiry] does is to push back and ask the questions that need to be asked... They don't shy away from difficult conversations, but tend to enter into them. That's been a huge value to our organization.”

Have The Tough Conversations

*Jane Cooper-Driver
Chief Program Officer, Primary Care Progress
Boston, MA*



“Authentic help means that all who are involved help each other mutually, growing together in the common effort to understand the reality which they seek to transform.”

Paulo Freire, theorist and educator



Integrate

MAKING IT STICK

_____The truth is, having a plan and training your team may not be enough to transform culture on their own. This work is perpetual; there is no end goal, where everything is perfect and a company doesn't need to change further. We are always evolving and improving, so change must be built into the foundation of your business model.

TARGETED SUPPORT WITH STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

Strategic interventions are those that have a targeted, intentional focus on areas of the business most acutely in need.

Instead of broad, generalized workshops, you can dive deep into a particular challenge. Noticing high turnover in one department? Let's focus there to better understand what is happening and how to correct it. Not seeing BIPOC (black, indigenous, people of color) or female employees rising above a specific management level? Put your focus on promotion, mentorship, and professional development.

By creating a system and process to conduct needs assessments and receive the necessary feedback, you can provide strategic interventions in an ongoing, "as needed" style.



TRANSFORMING YOUR INTERNAL STRUCTURE

After you've identified what policies and practices may be contributing to inequity and barriers for some employees, you need to design and implement new strategies to address them.

We can partner with your internal team to draft new policies and practices and help train your management team to embody these practices.

The most significant reform you can make is how you invite and use feedback. None of us,

including our consulting team, can truly predict every possible concern, challenge, and barrier that your team may identify. It's important that you have a clear and open channel to hear from your team.

We can help you build systems and policies that reinforce the characteristics of optimal work culture, creating tangible mechanisms for change that will keep your business growing for years to come.



BUILDING SUSTAINABILITY

TRAIN THE TRAINER

We are in the business of capacity building. Our long-term goal is to get every client to the place where they can continue culture change work internally, without the support of an external consultant. We want to teach you to do what we do.

To that end, we specialize in trainer development. We will work with your internal team to make sure they feel confident facilitating courageous dialogue and introducing concepts of safety, equity, inclusion, and culture with your employees. By focusing on internal capacity, you can begin a process of sustainable growth and discussion that will create lasting change for your organization.

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

One of the major barriers many organizations face is not having a clear strategy and process for delivery training internally. Teams have neither the bandwidth or the expertise to think longitudinally about what training needs to occur, over what period of time, how to integrate assessments and so on.

Having explicit educational design theory expertise, our team can build the custom curriculum you need to offer culture change work in your organization. From equity onboarding materials to management training and professional development, we can build a tailored curriculum in a comprehensive and clear manner.

Session outlines, trainer notes, participant guides, slides and other materials will be branded to you and able to be used in perpetuity.

“[When training others to facilitate], you just know Kate is going to be there, and you know that she will have something thoughtful to say to redirect tension in a way that is helpful to the trainee and the participants that were involved.”

*Marcel Tam,
Assistant Professor and Leadership Director,
Oregon Health and Science University
Portland, OR*



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“Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much.”

Hellen Keller

To learn more about our team and business, go to www.intinq.com

“We must think more holistically about change if we truly want DEI initiatives to create impactful change. We have to start with how we raise concerns, solve problems, and treat one another.”



Kate Stitham, Integrative Inquiry President & Founder

WHO WE ARE

Integrative Inquiry is a Maine-based consulting firm that partners with a diverse team of specialists from across the country to create lasting, impactful change for organizations.

We focus on capacity building and agency, so that organizations can take on culture change principles and continue to transform and evolve the way they work together long after we part ways.

Integrative Inquiry is a firm committed to equity across all dimensions of identity, including race. Our team represents a wide spectrum of perspective and experience, and this certainly informs and strengthens all aspects of our work.

The focus of our business is to develop organizational cultures where individuals have the interpersonal communication skills and awareness to help foster psychological safety. This ensures that difficult conversations can be addressed with transparency, vulnerability, and integrity.

For more information, go to www.integrativeinquiryllc.com.



integrative inquiry CONSULTING



Culture Change
That Works.



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