

In the Face of DEI Backlash, Belonging Emerges as the Key to Long-Term Success

Belonging: The Foundation for the Future of DEI Initiatives

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA,
September 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/
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Future of DEI Initiatives In the Face of
DEI Backlash, Belonging Emerges as
the Key to Long-Term Success

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THE CONVERSATION

The conversation is the world's leading publisher of
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As diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives face increasing scrutiny and rollback in



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workplaces across the United States, a new perspective is
emerging that could reshape the future of these efforts. In
a recently published article, Andrea Carter, an expert in
belonging and workplace culture, argues that the concept
of "belonging" holds the key to revitalizing and sustaining
DEI initiatives.

Carter, who serves as an Adjunct Professor at Adler
University and is the CEO and Founder of Belonging First,
highlights the growing disillusionment with traditional DEI
approaches. While DEI has become a prevalent focus in

American workplaces, recent trends reveal a significant decline in the commitment to these
initiatives, with some companies scaling back or abandoning their DEI efforts altogether. This
shift, Carter suggests, is partly due to misunderstandings and oversimplifications in how DEI is
implemented.

"Belonging is the heartbeat of a thriving organization," asserts Carter. "To truly experience belonging, it's not enough to be included; my research shows five critical indicators must also be present. This distinction underscores that belonging is a unique and essential experience, distinct from inclusion, and critical for fostering a truly cohesive and supportive environment."

Carter's research, supported by James D. Halbert, a Professor of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at Adler University, introduces five critical indicators of belonging: comfort, connection, contribution, psychological safety, and wellbeing. These indicators, she argues, are essential for fostering a truly cohesive and supportive workplace environment.

"Belonging is the bedrock of a thriving, innovative workplace," explains Carter. "When organizations prioritize these five indicators, they not only enhance individual wellbeing but also unlock the full potential of their teams, driving innovation and long-term success."

Carter and Halbert emphasize that belonging goes beyond inclusion by addressing the need for genuine connection and shared responsibility within the workplace. By focusing on creating environments where these indicators of belonging are prioritized, leaders can cultivate passion, loyalty, and excellence in their organizations.

As businesses grapple with the challenges of sustaining DEI initiatives in an increasingly complex and polarized environment, Carter's research provides a roadmap for leaders seeking to build



ADLER

Forbes Advisor named the Adler University online Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) in Industrial and Organizational (I/O) Psychology as one of the country's top programs.



Andrea D. Carter, Adjunct Professor for Adler University and the CEO and Founder of Belonging First, a consulting firm that advises companies on how to refine their DEI initiatives.

more resilient and inclusive workplaces. By integrating belonging into the fabric of their organizations, companies can navigate the current backlash against DEI and emerge stronger and more united.

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About the Authors:

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