



**CCDI Consulting Inc.**  
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## Newsletter

New ideas in IDEA

### February 2022

As you know it is Black History Month. I have a fascination with history and the trend in understanding history currently is storytelling. We live in a time where history of the average person has been documented and can be unearthed more readily. Heritage Canada has curated a [list of biographies](#) of some notable Black Canadians. I encourage you to discover some interesting stories.

Enjoy this month's article. In case you missed an article, they are [available in our archive](#).

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Sincerely,

Ian More  
Director of Marketing  
CCDI Consulting

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## Diversity Training: Failure and Opportunity

**Traditional diversity and anti-bias trainings have had disappointing results.**

Research has yielded evidence that most IDEA<sup>[1]</sup> trainings do not achieve significant change within the culture of organizations, and may even be detrimental. As sociologists Alexandra Kalev and Frank Dobbin write "...the typical diversity training program doesn't just fail to promote diversity, it actually leads to declines in management diversity."<sup>[2]</sup>

Many companies have spent considerable time and money on short-term diversity education, engaging consultants who come in, deliver seminars, issue reports and move on to the next client. This positive activity may look good in annual reports to stakeholders and shareholders and may help defend against lawsuits, but real opportunities for marginalized members of the workforce are still restricted after

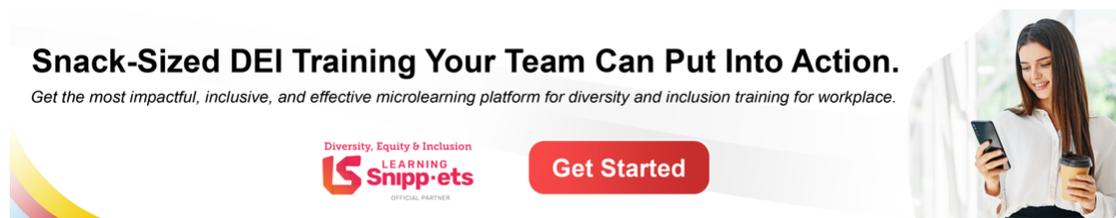
decades of various trainings. Research also suggests that mandatory attendance at trainings creates resentment and voluntary attendance creates a willingness to listen and learn. It may be harsh to suggest that most trainings are merely exercises in optics, but it's fair to say they have been ineffective.

### What type of training is effective?

Effective IDEA training doesn't end when the consultants' questionnaires and seminars are complete and the report is filed. Systemic change requires committed and persistent action by managers at all levels. Validation of the process by senior management encourages employee buy-in, and creates greater opportunities for real change. Simple changes can support employees' willingness to examine their own prejudices and biases. For one example, most people are resistant to mandatory trainings, but respond positively to open invitations.

Since every organization's culture has different elements that affect the delivery of programs, IDEA training should align with the organization's values and mission. The goal must be to not only change attitudes and perspectives, but also create sustained changes in behaviour.

Successful IDEA training may produce substantial benefits. Comprehensive and sustained IDEA training encourages a sense of belonging in the entire workforce, raising morale, helping to establish effective teams and a more cohesive organizational culture. IDEA training has also been found to increase the financial performance of companies that follow through with systemic changes to increase diversity and inclusion. A 2018 study by staff at the Boston Consulting Group found that companies with "above average" management diversity "...reported innovation revenue that was 19 percentage points higher than that of companies with below-average leadership diversity."<sup>[3]</sup> Also, a 2015 study by Josh Bersin<sup>[4]</sup> found that companies that scored highly in diversity and inclusion metrics experienced 2.3 times the cash flow per employee than companies with less diverse and inclusive management. Training does not have a negative effect on the bottom line.



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### Benefits of effective training

IDEA training produces happier, more engaged employees who stay longer at companies, improving retention rates and lowering recruitment costs. Changes in organizational culture also allow greater contributions by employees from groups who have previously been excluded from promotions, mentorships, and central roles in the organization's mission.

Marginalized employees represent a lost opportunity; organizations are paying for a detuned version of their people and are losing the potential for innovation that can be liberated by integrating IDEA principles with their culture.

<sup>[1]</sup> Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility

- [2] Kalev, A., & Dobbin, F. (2020, October 20). *Companies Need to Think Bigger Than Diversity Training*. www.hbr.org. Retrieved February 8, 2022, from <https://hbr.org/2020/10/companies-need-to-think-bigger-than-diversity-training>
- [3] Lorenzo, Rocio et al. 2018 January 23. *How Diverse Leadership Teams Boost Innovation*. Boston Consulting Group. <https://www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2018/how-diverse-leader-teams-boost-innovation>
- [4] Bersin, J. (2015, December 7). *Why Diversity and Inclusion Has Become a Business Priority*. www.joshbersin.com. Retrieved February 8, 2021, from <https://joshbersin.com/2015/12/why-diversity-and-inclusion-will-be-a-top-priority-for-2016/>
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CCDI Consulting | Consultation CCDI, 820 - 2 Carlton, Toronto, ON M5B 1J3, Canada