IMP Taking a Moment: Reflecting on our DEAI Responsibilities
March 9, 2021
Resources & Links

Emergent Strategy (Adrienne Maree Brown)
https://bookshop.org/books/emergent-strategy-shaping-change-changing-worlds/9781849352604

Videos/podcasts of Adrienne Maree Brown explaining:

Approximately 5 1/2 minutes -  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IyN76oTt67M

Approximately 50 minutes -  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyJz4McUbD0

Approximately 60 minutes -  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yp6HK3qq8rQ

Calling In
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DpUe1UPooAOaL9V3di_zHnvDV3n4S2H9/view?usp=sharing

Challenging the Narrative
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HgwhNGiRei-DNY3pZ2b3PmnOAKIcoli/view?usp=sharing

Detour-Spotting
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1A5YwbWLGjql2qKFjbJWVjygNpqBTHsx/view?usp=sharing

Interrogating Institutional Practices DEAI
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zpz0MRqG_xcWftw5s6sf0R9xxbKfhU9/view?usp=sharing

Kendi - Racism as Policy
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aA0-wp6AjD7uVzjni2CLnM4TzlsRxlO/view?usp=sharing

Anti-racism continuum
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TViLLvMtHssh-FSB4mr5FolaV7uB8mLe/view

AAM hiring resource
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vOY7362aHhRPve2B6iZC8T-w7EHLvBrd/view?usp=sharing

On-boarding
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pgw4hIinvnmSSi6ONYV512eYYn0Xh6s/view

Other links from chat
We’re Not That Hard to Find
https://unitedarts.cc/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/were-not-that-hard-to-find.pdf

Barriers to Entry

How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible
https://aoda.ca/how-to-make-the-hiring-process-accessible/
Trans people have the right to get angry about transantagonism. Women and non-binary people have those who are mentally ill shouldn't feel afraid to participate in these online spaces – when people who are part of it. This way, we can create a sustainable, compassionate movement that nurtures the change.

I didn't need someone to shout at me for using a phrase I didn't know to be ignores trans issues altogether. For example, I met with a group of young high school girls recently to discuss feminism and social change.

When it comes to supporting marginalized groups, the impact of our actions is more important than we often realize. As a queer person, I should not be expected to educate every person who perpetuates heterosexism – our supporters should be doing that for us whenever they can. It is exhausting for marginalized people to constantly call in people who have privilege over them, so Nobody should feel obligated to call someone in, especially when it's too emotionally exhausting.

1. Do I Have the Emotional Capacity to Call Someone in Right Now?

We can burn out really easily. We can run out of patience. And some people are simply not worth our energy. We can also turn around and say, "But I didn't mean to hurt you! I'm trying to help you! I refuse to get offend you!"

An alternative option is asking another person – perhaps an ally – to call them in and help educate them. The beauty of social media is that we can quickly link our friends to educational articles, so when someone does that, I explain how their actions hurt my feelings. I'll be sure to explain how the person doesn't understand exactly why their behavior is harmful.

Lastly, we should be willing to have a discussion with them about their actions. How does this fit into calling people in? Well, a person's intentions might not make their actions any less offensive. Calling in as a practice of loving each other. If everyone reading this only gave $12, we could raise enough money for the entire year in just one day.

Found this article helpful?
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

You left off some of the best! Beautiful, inspiring women.

JODY

As a thruhiker, I want to challenge those of us with a duty to "pay it forward" to do so now by showing up for all our trail buddies we haven't yet met. Now's the time.

JADE

having worried. In reaction to brilliant calls such as yours here, some people, I often read, insidiously resort to poisoning the well with accusations of political correctness in-

Comments

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REPLY

@brownpeoplecamping

@ruemapp

@theblackoutdoors

@teresabaker11

@theblackalachian

@letsplayrideandseek

@ashanishinaabe

@irietoaurora

@ayesuppose

@outdoorjournaltour

@melaninbasecamp

@unlikelyhikers

@GirlVentures

@Super Fresh

@Pru Apparel

@Beast Fingers Climbing:

Black woman.

and killed. Three men face charges in his death. Support efforts for justice by signing the petition or

Colorado Blackpackers:

Connecting under-represented youth and young adults in Atlanta, GA to the

Color Outside:

Big City Mountaineers:

A non-profit that connects communities of color to outdoor spaces while also

This collection of small business owners, BIPOC and LGBTQ+ outdoor influencers,

what it's like hiking through rural America as a black man.

"Miss Buchanan's Period Of Adjustment" on Revisionist History

For more reads,

Between the World and Me

Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility

The Outdoor Industry's Inclusion Problem

Stop Making Movies About White Guys Doing Cool Shit:

The Triple Crown.

Q&A with Elsye "Chardonnay" Walker: Likely the First Black, Female Triple Crowner:

their stories and opinions about what it's like to backpack on America's long-distance trails.

Backpacking in America as a Person of Color: Hikers Share Their Experiences:

history that has brought you to reside and recreate on lands, and to seek to understand your place within

make the outdoors a safer, more inclusive space for the BIPOC and LGBTQ+ community.

Five Ways to Make the Outdoors More Inclusive:

Privilege, self-awareness and action as outdoor allies.

An incredible,

These articles are a good start to understanding different points of view and the systemic exclusivity

contemporary issues.

Park.

When They See Us:

Streaming on Netflix. Five Harlem teens are falsely accused of an attack in Central

World War, when the nation struggled to rebuild itself in the face of profound loss, massive destruction, and

safer, more inclusive space for all.

the voices of those who have been silenced for too long.

has this privilege. We need to utilize our voices and platforms to generate change.

the ability for us to escape to the woods and "tune it out," the writers of this post included. Admitting that

No, you cannot escape society's problems in the outdoors. The outdoor industry generates

recognizing and fighting it.

outdoors in America, but that doesn't excuse non-Black members of the outdoor community from

discomfort.

One of the universal characteristics of people who love the outdoors is that we enthusiastically lean into

Challenging the Narrative and Amplifying Voices: Resources for

Policing Black and Brown Bodies in the Outdoors

The Best Backpacking Packs of 2021

MORE RESOURCES

FOLLOW
DETOUR-SPOTTING
for white anti-racists

joan olsson

For white people living in North America learning to be anti-racist is a re-education process. We must unlearn our thorough racist conditioning to re-educate and re-condition ourselves as anti-racists. There is scant social or political encouragement for this journey of re-education. We are constantly tempted to detour off course by the racist propaganda of society and our own guilt and denial. In the face of society’s and our own resistance, sustaining the will to continue this journey takes bold and stubborn effort.

This journey sends us into unfamiliar territory. No white person has ever lived in a non-racist North America. We were never taught the skills of anti-racist living. Indeed, we were carefully taught the opposite: how to maintain our white privilege. Racism, the system of oppression (of people of color) and advantage (for white people) depends on the collusion and cooperation of white people for its perpetuation.

Most of us first became aware of racial prejudice and injustice as children. As white infants we were fed a pabulum of racist propaganda. That early “training” was comprehensive and left little room for question, challenge or doubt. Our childhood games, rhymes and media conspired: “Eenie, meenie, minie, mo; Catch a n…r by his toe …” We played cowboys and Indians. All of us knew the Indians were bad and had to die. My WWII generation watched “Bugs Bunny” outwit evil Japanese villains. As Lillian Smith acknowledged:

“These ceremonials in honor of white supremacy, performed from babyhood, slip from the conscious mind down deep into muscles and glands… and become difficult to tear out.” (1)

Our generous child wisdom told us racism was wrong, but there was no escaping the daily racist catechism. We resisted the lies, the deceit and the injustice of racism, but we did not have the skills to counter the poisonous messages. Our conditioning filled us with fear, suspicion and stereotypes that substituted for true knowing of people of color. We internalized our beliefs about people of color, ourselves, other white people and about being white. Those internalized attitudes became actualized into racist behavior.

As I continue my journey toward becoming a re-conditioned and effective anti-racist, I have become aware of “habits,” attitudes and their attached behaviors, which divert me from my intended goal. To change the detouring behavior, I must first be fully conscious of what I’m doing, the behavior and its consequences. Next, I need to reflect on the behavior’s attitudinal roots. Finally, I determine the prescribed, desired change I want to make and the best strategy for achieving it. Sometimes I need to remove the behavior from my personal repertoire. More often though, re-tooling is necessary, replacing the discarded pattern with new behaviors. It will likely take repeated attempts before I have fully internalized and externalized the desired change.
Most of the obstacles and detours encountered on our journey of re-education are those same habitual behaviors birthed in our internalized beliefs. The behaviors will vary with each white person. I recognize that no two white people share exactly the same experiences and societal moldings. We learned racism in our unique and personal ways from different teachers and at different times. But we all learned the lessons well. I have observed in myself and other white people some common patterns of guilt, denial and defensiveness which appear regularly in our interactions with people of color and other white people.

Eighteen common detours from our anti-racist journey are examined in this way:

#) **The Detour’s Title**
Attitudes or behaviors that signal a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

**Reality Check and Consequence**
A clarification of the underlying meaning and consequence of this behavior pattern.

1) **I’m Colorblind**
“People are just people; I don’t see color.” Or “I don’t think of you as Chinese.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**
Statements like these assume that people of color are just like us, white, and have the same dreams, standards, problems, peeves that we do. “Colorblindness” negates the cultural values, norms, expectations and life experiences of people of color. Even if an individual white person could ignore a person’s color, the society does not. By saying we don’t see their color, we are also saying we don’t see our whiteness. This denies their experience of racism and our experience of privilege.

“I’m colorblind” can also be a defense when afraid to discuss racism, especially if one assumes all conversation about race or color is racist. As my friend Rudy says, “I don’t mind that you notice that I’m Black.” Color consciousness does not equal racism.

2) **The Rugged Individual and The Bootstrap Theory**
“America is the land of opportunity, built by rugged individuals, where anyone with grit can succeed if they just pull up hard enough on their bootstraps.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**
The “rugged individual” and the “bootstrap theory” are two of the crown jewels of U.S. social propaganda. They have allowed generation after generation to say, “If you succeed, you did that, but if you fail, or if you’re poor, that’s your fault.” Belief in this propaganda is founded in a total denial of the impact of either oppression or privilege on any person’s chance for success.

3) **Reverse Racism**
(a) “People of color are just as racist as white people.”
“Affirmative Action had a role years ago, but today it’s just reverse racism; now it’s discriminating against white men.”

The civil rights movement, when it began was appropriate, valuable, needed. But it’s gone to the extreme. The playing field is now level. Now the civil rights movement is no longer worker for equality but for revenge.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

Let’s first define racism:

\[ \text{Racism} = \text{Racial Prejudice (white people and people of color have this)} \]

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{Plus} \\
\text{Systemic, Institutional Power (white people have this)}
\end{align*} \]

To say People of Color can be racist, denies the power imbalance inherent in racism. Certainly, people of color can be and are prejudiced against white people. That was part of their societal conditioning. A person of color can act on their prejudices to insult, even hurt a white person. But there is a difference between being hurt and being oppressed. People of color, as a social group, do not have the societal, institutional power to oppress white people as a group. An individual person of color abusing a white person – while clearly wrong, (no person should be insulted, hurt, etc.) is acting out of a personal racial prejudice, not racism.

This form of denial is based in the false notion that the playing field is now level. When the people with privilege and historical access and advantage are expected to suddenly (in societal evolution time) share some of that power, it is often perceived as discrimination.

This was said by Rush Limbaugh, who is obviously no anti-racist, but this comment is loaded with white people’s fears of people of color, especially if “they” gained control. Embedded here is also the assumption that to be “pro-Black” (or any color) is to be anti-white. A similar illogical accusation is directed at women who work for and end to violence against women and girls. Women who work to better the lives of women are regularly accused of being “anti-male.”

**4) Blame the Victim**

“We have advertised everywhere, there just aren’t any qualified people of color for this job.” Or “If he only had a stronger work ethic.” Or (b) “If she just felt better about herself…” Or “Internalized racism is the real problem here.” Or (c) “She uses racism as an excuse to divert us from her incompetence.” And “He goes looking for racism everywhere.” (As if racism is so hidden or hard to uncover that people of color would have to search for it.)
**Reality Check and Consequence**
All “blame the victim” behaviors have two things in common. First, they evade the real problem: racism. Second, they delete from the picture the agents of racism, white people and institutions, which either intentionally perpetuate or unintentionally collude with racism. As long as the focus remains on people of color we can minimize or dismiss their reactions, and never have to look directly at racism and our own responsibility or collusion.

5) **Innocent By Association**
“I’m not racist, because ... I have Vietnamese friends, or my lover is Black, I donate to Casa Latina, or I marched with Dr. King.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**
This detour into denial wrongly equates personal interactions with people of color, no matter how intimate they may be, with anti-racism. It assumes our personal associations free us magically from our racist conditioning.

6) **The white knight or white missionary**
“We (white people) know just where to build your new community center.” Or “Your young people (read youth of color) would be better served by traveling to our suburban training center.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**
It is a racist, paternalistic assumption that well meaning white people know what’s best for people of color. Decisions, by white people, are made on behalf of people of color, as though they were incapable of making their own. This is another version of “blame the victim” and “white is right.” It places the problems at the feet of people of color, and the only “appropriate” solutions with white people. Once more the power of self-determination is taken from people of color. Regardless of motive, it is still about white control.

7) **The White Wash**
“He’s really a very nice guy, he’s just had some bad experiences with Koreans.” Or “That’s just the way Uncle Adolf jokes. He’s very polite to the Black janitor in his building.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**
We’re trapped here by another version of our guilt response. We attempt to excuse, defend or cover up racist actions of other white people. We are particularly prone to this if the other person is close to us, family or friend, and if we feel their actions reflect on us.

8) **I Was An Indian in A Former Life** (2)
“As after that sweat lodge I really know what it feels like to be an Indian. I have found my true spiritual path.”
**Reality Check and Consequence**

This is spiritual or cultural appropriation and poses a serious threat to the integrity and survival of Native cultures. To fill a void in their own spiritual core, some white people are drawn into the New Age garden to pick from a variety of Native spiritual packages usually offered for sale. Since Native spiritual practice is inseparable from their history and current community, it cannot be disconnected from that context to service white people searching for life’s meaning. Appropriating selected parts of Native cultures romanticizes the lives of Native peoples while denying their struggles. Their lands and livelihoods stolen, indigenous peoples now witness white people trying to steal their spirituality. Rather than escape our white racism by finding a spiritual path, we instead collude in one more way with the genocidal attacks on Native cultures.

9) **The Isolationist**

“I thought we resolved this issue (racism) when it came up on the board last year.” Or “We need to deal with this specific incident. Don’t complicate it by bringing up irrelevant incidences of the past.” Or “This only happened today because the TV news last night showed police beating a Black kid.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

Attempts are made to isolate a particular incident of racism from of the larger context. We blame a publicized incident of racism outside our organization to rationalize an internal incident and to avoid facing the reality of racism within. When trying to resolve an accusation of racism within an institution, we often see the incident in a vacuum, or as an aberration, in isolation from an historic pattern of racism. Racism has been so institutionalized that every “incident” is another symptom of the pattern. If we continue to react incident to incident, crisis to crisis, as though they are unconnected, we will find genuine resolution only further from our reach.

10) **“Bending Over Blackwards”** (3)

“Of course, I agree with you.”) Said to a person of color even when I disagree) or “I have to side with Betty on this.” (Betty being a woman of color.)

**Reality Check and Consequence**

Our white guilt shows up as we defer to people of color. We don’t criticize, disagree, challenge or question them the way we would white people. And if we do disagree, we don’t do it with the same conviction or passion that we would display with a white person. Our racism plays out as a different standard for people of color than for white people. If this is our pattern, we can never have a genuine relationship with a person of color. People of color when we are doing this. Our sincerity, commitment and courage will be rightly questioned. W cannot grow to a deeper level of trust and intimacy with people of color we treat in this way.
11) **BWAME**

“**But What About Me.** Look how I’ve been hurt, oppressed, exploited…?”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

This diminishes the experience of people of color by telling my own story of hardship. I lose an opportunity to learn more about the experience of racism from a person of color, while I minimize their experience by trying to make it comparable or less painful than mine.

12) **Teach Me, Please**

“I want to stop acting like a racist, so please tell me when I do something you think is racist.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

White people often assume we can learn about racism only from people of color. We further assume that people of color have the energy and/or desire to do this teaching. My understanding is that most people of color are weary of educating white people about racism. We will get stuck. We’ll get frustrated and impatient with ourselves and other white people in this struggle. And we’ll stay stuck if we don’t seek help from other white anti-racists. Our inclination has been to ask people of color to help us. We should seek out other white people BEFORE we go to people of color. Perhaps, as we become more trustworthy as allies, we will build genuine relationships with a few people of color who offer their reflections for us when we get stuck. This is at their discretion, not ours. We can’t assume people of color should be so grateful for our attempts at anti-racism, that they will be willing to guide us whenever we are ready to be guided.

13) **White On White, and Righteously So**

“What is wrong with those white people? Can’t they see how racist they’re being?” Or “I just can’t stand to be around white people who act so racist.” And

**You’re Preaching To The Choir**

“You’re wasting your time with us, we’re not the people who need this training.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

We distance ourselves from “other” white people. We see only confirmed bigots, card-carrying white supremacists and white people outside our circle as “real racists.” We put other white people down, trash their work or behavior, or otherwise dismiss them. We righteously consider ourselves white people who have evolved beyond our racist conditioning. This is another level of denial. There are no “exceptional white people.” (4) We may have attended many anti-racism workshops; we may not be shouting racist epithets or actively discriminating against people of color, but we still experience privilege based on our white skin color. We benefit from this system of oppression and advantage, no matter what our intentions are. This distancing serves only to divide us from potential allies and limit our own learning.
14) The “Certificate of Innocence”
Sometimes we seek or expect from people of color some public or private recognition and appreciation for our anti-racism. Other times we look for a “certificate of innocence” to tell us we are one of the good white people.

Reality Check and Consequence
If our ally commitment depends on positive reinforcement from people of color, we set ourselves up for sure failure. The first time a person of color is displeased with our actions, we could respond, “Well, if the people I’m doing all this for don’t want my help, then why bother? I quit.” Clearly, we’re challenging racism for “them” not for us. We have not identified our self-interest, as white people, for fighting racism. Until we do, we cannot stay on this lifelong journey.

15) Smoke And Mirrors
We use the current PC language; we listen to the right music; we state the liberal line; we’re seen at the right meetings with the right people. We even interrupt racist remarks when the right people are watching and when there is no risk to us. We look like an anti-racist.

Reality Check and Consequence
This is the “Avon Ally,” the cosmetic approach. People of color and other white anti-racists see through this pretense quickly. This pseudo-anti-racist posturing only serves to collude with racism and weakens the credibility of sincere white anti-racists.

16) The Accountant
We keep a tally sheet. If we perform some “feat of anti-racism,” we expect reciprocity from an individual or group of color, usually with some prestige or power that can serve our interests.

Reality Check and Consequence
“I scratch your back, you scratch mine is NOT justice seeking nor ally behavior. It serves only to reduce justice work to some kind of power brokering currency.

17) Silence
We stay silent.

Reality Check and Consequence
Our silence may be a product our guilt or fear of making people of color or white people angry with us or disappointed in us. We may be silent because our guilt stops us from disagreeing with people of color. We may be afraid that speaking out could result in losing some of our privilege. We may be silenced by fear of violence. The reasons for our silence are many, but each time we miss an opportunity to interrupt racism, or to act as allies or to interact genuinely with people of color or other white people. And no anti-racist action is taken as long as we are silent.
[A note about silence: Silence is a complicated issue/matter. There are times when faced with a potential intervention situation that I may choose not to interrupt – for reasons of good sense or strategy. Anti-racists need courage, but foolish risks makes little sense. When the choice is between intervening in this moment, alone, or gathering allies to speak out later in a more strategic way, the latter may prove more effective.]

18) **Exhaustion And Despair – Sound The Retreat**

“I’m exhausted. I’m only one person. I can stop and rest for awhile.” Or “Racism is so pervasive and entrenched, there just isn’t any hope.”

**Reality Check and Consequence**

Despair is a real enemy of anti-racists. For our commitment to be a lifelong one, we must find ways to mitigate the effects. Burn-out or desertion are of no use to the struggle. We can remember men who jumped on a “Take Back the Night” bandwagon, challenging violence against women – for a while. Until the attention on them as good men waned. Until the “glamour” of the issue faded. One of the historical, repeated failures of “liberals” in social justice movements has been short-term and inconsistent commitment to the “issue du jour.”

If we quit, for any reason, we engage our “default option.” (5) As white people, we can take a break from the frustration and despair of anti-racism work. Such retreat will result in no significant consequences for us. Racism doesn’t allow such a respite for people of color. One of the elemental privileges of being white is our freedom to retreat from the issue of racism. If things get too tough we can always take a break. And our work against racism doesn’t get done.

**THE JOURNEY CONTINUES**

Once identified, behaviors like those above are possible to change. The patterns are repeated less often. We re-educate and re-tool ourselves to avoid racist behaviors and to take more potent anti-racist action.

People of color will continue to demand their rights, opportunities and full personhood. But racism in North America won’t end because people of color demand it. Racism will only end when a significant number of white people of conscience, the people who can wield systemic privilege and power with integrity, find the will and take the action to dismantle it.

That won’t happen until white people find racism in our daily consciousness as often as people of color do. For now we have to drag racism into our consciousness intentionally, for unlike our sisters and brothers of color, the most present daily manifestation of our white privilege is the possibility of forgetting about racism. We cannot. Racism continues in the name of all white people. While there is nothing about racism to celebrate, there is much to celebrate in a life lived in the pursuit of justice.
ENDNOTES
4. Credit to Kathleen Carlin for her “Principle of Intentions versus Effect” from her anti-sexism work. Translated here to a racism corollary. Before her death in 1996 she was the Executive Director of Men Stopping Violence in Atlanta, GA.
5. Term from Dr. Molesi Kete Asante, Chair of African American Studies, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA.

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As museums strive to build deeper connections with historically excluded communities, they face a number of hurdles. We undertook a survey of 26 major US museums to understand the challenges faced by museum educators and to assess the diversity of museum educators in terms of race and gender. While educators are a relatively substantial presence in positions of intellectual leadership, defined as educators, curators, directors, and board members, we also found in the survey that institutions seeking to attract and retain educators may need to go beyond traditional qualifications and requirements.

### The Role of Educators

Educators are crucial for building diverse audiences. Through their programs and partnerships, they can gather a diverse set of cultural competencies, ensuring that everything from wall text, to programming, to curatorial practices is accessible to everyone. Historically underrepresented and disadvantaged communities can benefit greatly from this exposure to the visual culture of their own communities.

### Challenges and Opportunities

1. **Equity and Inclusion:** Museum staff and audiences face issues of equity and inclusion. In the survey, we endeavored to capture these experiences and understand how each museum thinks about diversity in relation to its staff, visitors, and programming.

   *Recommendation: Reach New Communities through Partnerships*

   Museums are increasingly working with communities to serve as conduits for outreach initiatives. In Pittsburgh, for example, the Warhol Museum ran an ad campaign that included one of its social media accounts, the Pittsburgh police department. This led to a partnership with an artist involved in the protest, D.S. Kinsel. This partnership led to public and private conversations about racial identity and generational understanding.

   - **Pittsburgh police department:** The police department shared their perspectives on the protests and the community's response. This conversation was moderated by Shiner, Kinsel, and Chief of Police Cameron McClay.
   - **Artists and activists:** Artists and activists in Pittsburgh's black community shared their experiences and perspectives on the protests. This partnership led to public conversations about racial identity and generational understanding.

2. **Board Diversity:** Museums are also interested in understanding how each museum thinks about diversity in relation to its board membership. However, diversifying the museum's board is seen by many museum directors as one of the most difficult challenges they face.

   *Recommendation: Broaden Job Requirements*

   - **Education departments:** Museums often seek professionals with a background in art education or museum studies. However, museums may benefit from experimenting with new organizational structures and budgetary reallocations.
   - **LACMA:** As an example, LACMA has worked toward cultivating alignment among staff for equity, diversity, and inclusion. This includes identifying and implementing strategies to ensure that everyone in the museum leadership is engaged in these efforts.

3. **Retention and Recruitment:** Another challenge faced by museums is the retention and recruitment of educators. Educators are often interested in working in museums because they believe in the importance of public art and education. However, they may face challenges in building a career in a field that is often perceived as less lucrative than other fields.

   *Recommendation: Experiment with New Organizational Structures and Budgetary Reallocations*

   Museums may consider creating new structures that allow for more horizontal and vertical engagement among staff. Formal reorganizations can have a meaningful impact in these efforts, allowing staff to share knowledge and experience across the organization.

4. **Training and Development:** Finally, museums may benefit from training and development programs that draw from communities proximate to the museum. These programs can help to build a workforce that is more diverse and better equipped to connect with audiences from all backgrounds.

   **An Example:** The Detroit Institute of Arts has succeeded in recruiting diverse board members through a high level of engagement with the community. As a result, the museum has been able to better serve the needs of its audience and attract new visitors.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, museums face significant challenges in building diverse audiences and boards. However, by experimenting with new organizational structures and budgetary reallocations, museums can create a more welcoming environment for all. Museums must also prioritize training and development programs that draw from communities proximate to the museum. By taking these steps, museums can build a more inclusive and equitable future.
To reduce risk, build in conversation on what they are saying person is being in any related America, 1619, April 7, 2020. "I had consumed many of the mainstream assumptions about race. As a high school senior, he delivered a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day speech in which he blamed Black people for racial problems. Even he had internalized conventional thinking around racism misses the point. First and foremost, he argued, it is power and not people that keep racism firmly entrenched in society. During the conversation, Kendi shared how he internalized conventional thinking around racism, as he changed his notion of what makes a person "racist." He also gave examples of how he changed his notion of what makes a person "racist."

"They understand 'racist' and 'not racist' as fixed categories," he said. "'This is 'Racist' literally describes what a person is being in any given moment, not what they are saying or not saying as they are speaking. Rather, argued Kendi, the term "racist" should instead be understood as a descriptor. "It doesn't really matter if the policymaker intended for that policy to lead to racial inferiority." If we train our focus on outcomes and victims, Kendi said, "intention will become irrelevant." It's the effect that matters. Rather than asking whether someone has a racial idea, we should ask, "What's the effect of that idea? What is it doing?"

Kendi: Racism is about power and policy? All of that is critical." For too long, Kendi told the audience, society's understanding of racism has been based on what people are saying or not saying, doing or not doing. If we train our focus on outcomes and victims, Kendi said, "intention will become irrelevant." It's the effect that matters. Rather than asking whether someone has a racial idea, we should ask, "What's the effect of that idea? What is it doing?"

"They wanted to remain and not rest on fixed categories," he said. "They wanted to be right and not wrong. For the media and others, that meant that people who were not racist had to be seen as not racist and people who were racist had to be seen as racist.

"I want to change that. I want to be a historian," he said. "To reduce risk, build in conversation on what they are saying person is being in any given moment, not what they are saying or not saying as they are speaking. Rather, argued Kendi, the term "racist" should instead be understood as a descriptor. "It doesn't really matter if the policymaker intended for that policy to lead to racial inferiority." If we train our focus on outcomes and victims, Kendi said, "intention will become irrelevant." It's the effect that matters. Rather than asking whether someone has a racial idea, we should ask, "What's the effect of that idea? What is it doing?"

"I had consumed many of the mainstream assumptions about race. As a high school senior, he delivered a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day speech in which he blamed Black people for racial problems. Even he had internalized conventional thinking around racism misses the point. First and foremost, he argued, it is power and not people that keep racism firmly entrenched in society. During the conversation, Kendi shared how he internalized conventional thinking around racism, as he changed his notion of what makes a person "racist." He also gave examples of how he changed his notion of what makes a person "racist.""
Significantly, it is not the lack of representation of their own identity that they find off-putting, but rather the lack of a variety of backgrounds.

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### Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An Exclusionary Institution</td>
<td>A &quot;Club&quot; Institution</td>
<td>A Compliance Organization</td>
<td>An Affirming Institution</td>
<td>A Transforming Institution</td>
<td>Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans</td>
<td>• Tolerant of a limited number of “token” People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with &quot;proper&quot; perspective and credentials.</td>
<td>• Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity</td>
<td>• Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity</td>
<td>• Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity</td>
<td>• Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• May still secretly or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies</td>
<td>• Sees itself as &quot;non-racist&quot; institution with open doors to People of Color</td>
<td>• Develops analysis of systemic racism</td>
<td>• Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their worldview, culture and lifestyles</td>
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<td>• Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels</td>
<td>• Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting &quot;someone of color&quot; on committees or office staff</td>
<td>• Develops intentional identity as an &quot;anti-racist&quot; institution</td>
<td>• Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work</td>
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<td>• Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc.</td>
<td>• Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups</td>
<td>• Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities</td>
<td>• Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities</td>
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<td>• Openly maintains the dominant group’s power and privilege</td>
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<td>• Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage</td>
<td>• Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset</td>
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<td>But…</td>
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<td>• Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity</td>
<td>• Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments</td>
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<td>&quot;Not those who make waves&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making</td>
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<td>Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched</td>
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<td>Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control</td>
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<td>Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture</td>
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Hiring Tips to Create Value and Inclusion for all Disciplines in Museums

Posted on Mar 29, 2019

A museum human resources leader wants the field to value all staff positions equally and see the opportunities they represent for diversity. Photo credit: Kevin Harber on Flickr. CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Ayanna Reed, Director of Human Resources, Oakland Museum of California

There are qualified and diverse candidates out there who may not be aware that museums are a sustainable career option for them—it’s our job as a field to recruit and retain this virtually untapped market. One important way to achieve this is to highlight that museums offer careers in a range of disciplines, all equally valuable as career opportunities. These vast disciplines include and extend beyond the curatorial roles most people associate with
museums, and reinforcing this can attract diverse talent whose skills are in other areas. We in the field thank the Mellon Foundation for highlighting through its surveys the need to diversify the curatorial field and other more traditional museum roles, and would like to showcase all the other positions that support museums and present an opportunity for this diversity. Here are some tips for hiring with this mindset:

1. Invest in the fundamentals. Do you recognize and validate the diversity of career paths and skills across your institution (i.e. Facilities, Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology, Marketing & Communications, Administration, Security, etc.)?

It takes all functions to keep a museum running and to provide a safe and welcoming space for staff and visitors. There are many roles and skill sets in the museum world that are sometimes undervalued because they fall outside of the “curatorial sphere,” but these same roles and skill sets are highly valued by other fields that we compete with for talent, and with a current unemployment rate of less than four percent in the U.S. we are in a competitive talent market. If we’re going to attract strong, diverse candidates to fill all of the roles in our institutions, we need to shift our language and recruitment practices to ensure that non-curatorial roles are not positioned or understood, either implicitly or explicitly, as secondary to content-related roles. A few ways to do this include: ensuring these roles are hired into your organizations; placing these positions in leadership roles; and paying equitable wages based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the position combined with market rate pay, in alignment with your organizational budget.

2. Evaluate your education requirements. Do you require a master’s degree as a point of entry for your “professional” roles?

While specific degrees are important in some functions, consider a vast array of degrees and majors for positions where this is not true; determine if college degrees or beyond are a true requirement for the position in lieu of experience. Consider depth of experience in a similar role, or transferrable skills and competencies that can open the doors for diversity of thought within the organization. To help eliminate barriers, remove the educational requirements for positions where it is not required.

3. Focus job requirements on transferable skills, not just demonstrated museum experience.

To expand museum opportunities to a more diverse population, the field can look at the
knowledge, skills, abilities and previous experience highlighted on a candidate’s resume. Requiring previous museum-specific experience limits the ability for a wider array of individuals to apply for positions. Consider recruiting from the hospital or hotel industries for roles in customer service, sales, and facilities, for instance. These populations work in environments that expect high standards of customer service, have diverse clientele, and have high-volume visitation.

4. **Evaluate the titles of your positions.** Museum and non-profit titles can be very specific or highlight characteristics of the person and not the position. Consider using more universal position titles when you post for positions externally.

By using more universal position titles for postings, you will expand the reach to individuals who may have never considered working for a museum. Using more universal titles in conjunction with internal titles will attract individuals not familiar with museum-specific language, such as philanthropy instead of development, exhibit builder instead of preparator, or customer service & sales associate instead of visitor experience associate. Remove titles like “diversity intern” and limit naming positions after their funders if you want the role integrated into your organization. Titling an employee’s position with the name of a funder (with limited exceptions) or by pointing out the need for a diversity-specific position does not typically provide a welcoming environment where the employee feels like a complete member of the team based on their experience or ability to contribute to the organization. It often emphasizes that the person is there short-term, or for a particular project or program, and people may not invest the time and resources to truly engage them and help them grow. Invest in grant-funded positions, fellowships, and internships like you would invest in any staff member, as they are ambassadors and can create transformational leadership at all levels.

These few tips can enhance opportunities related to recruitment, inclusion, and retention in museums.

**About the author:**

As Oakland Museum of California’s Director of Human Resources, **Ayanna Reed** brings more than 20 years of experience in human resource management. Prior to joining OMCA, she served as the Human Resource and Facilities Manager and Interim Director of Human Resources for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. She is currently the President of the Board of the Northern California Chapter of the National Association of African Americans in Human
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Ayanna Reed, Director of Human Resources, Oakland Museum of California

Upcoming Events

Exploring Old Loans: A Quest for Resolution
April 16, 2019, 2:00–3:30 EDT
The essential new hire checklist for managers

Congratulations! If you are reviewing this manager checklist, it’s likely because a new teammate has joined your organization. Providing new employees with the right tools, communication and a smooth onboarding experience is essential in laying the foundation for a successful experience on your team.

In fact, a positive orientation can make all the difference in your company’s retention rates, as more than half of voluntary turnover happens within 6 months of new hire’s start date. Use this checklist as a handy guide to ensure you’ve covered the bases of everything a new hire will need to know in their first week through their first 90 days. While we are using best practices gleaned from hundreds of businesses, you should tailor this template based on your organization’s needs. You can also access an Excel version of this template here.

Check Lists
PG 2 – Two weeks prior to start date
PG 3 – One week prior to start date
PG 4 – First day checklist
PG 6 – First week checklist
PG 7 – First 30 days check-in
PG 8 – First 90 days check-in
Two weeks prior to start date

Depending on the size of your organization, the following tasks may fall into your court or HR’s. Regardless, be sure to have this information collected prior to your new hire’s first day to ensure you have the required documentation and can streamline applicable benefits and payroll.

Offer letter and employment agreement

☐ Offer letter sent and signed (confirm start date and salary)
☐ Background check completed ([Learn more on background checks here](#))
☐ Employment agreement signed
☐ Drug screening passed (if applicable) ([Learn more about drug screening tests here](#))

Employment details

☐ Employee contact information (address, cell, in case of emergency contact info)
☐ Obtain an employer identification number ([EIN](#))
☐ W-4 Federal Tax Withholding Form
☐ W-4 State Tax Withholding Forms
☐ Employee I-9 form complete (confirms worker’s eligibility to work in the U.S.)
  Verification documents can include:
  ▪ Unexpired U.S. passport or passport card
  ▪ Unexpired temporary resident card
  ▪ Unexpired employment authorization card
  ▪ Unexpired temporary resident card
☐ Submit employee information to [State New Hire Reporting Agency](#)
☐ Equal Opportunity Data From (Only needed for companies with more than 100+ employees. This varies depending on if your company handles federal contracts.)
☐ Direct deposit form
☐ Employee benefits enrollment forms
☐ Employee handbook review
☐ Policy documents handled (i.e. NDA or non-compete)

Pro Tip — *It can be quite daunting to collect and store the above information in an organized and compliant fashion. Learn how Zenefits’ all-in-one People Platform collects, stores and manages all HR related information so you can get back to doing the work that you love.*
One week prior to start date

Even though your hire hasn’t officially started, the week prior to their start date represents a critical prep time. This is when you’ll build your schedule, begin building rapport and communication with their future colleagues, and provision the tools they’ll need to have a fast and lasting impact.

Set a meeting schedule

☐ New hire training or onboarding (if applicable, connect with HR to ensure your new hire is included in their plans)
☐ Check-ins with your broader team to get introduced and connect on joint initiatives
☐ Check-ins with leadership to touch base and say welcome
☐ Cross-functional partners

Pro Tip — Reflect on the responsibilities of your new hire and brainstorm who will be key collaborators in their day to day. Set these meetings up early so your existing team has time to prepare.

Provision required tools and equipment

☐ Computer and equipment (keyboard, mouse, monitor if applicable)
☐ Email account set up
☐ Add to appropriate email alias groups
☐ Add to company calendar and relevant recurring meetings
☐ Badge for building and office access (if applicable)
☐ Grant access to tools and systems (passcodes and/or accounts)

Pro Tip — Whether this action falls into your court or HR’s, be sure to be thinking about integral tools early on. System access can take time, and you want to ensure early access so your new hire feels productive on day one.

Send new hire welcome email

☐ Prepare and send new hire welcome email
   (more information on new employee email available here)
☐ Date and time of arrival
☐ What to bring
☐ Parking and building access
☐ Who to ask for upon arrival
☐ Dress code or appropriate attire
☐ Office map and directions for how to enter your office
☐ Attach employee handbook (employee handbook template available here)
First day checklist

A first day on the job is like any other first meeting – *first impressions matter!* By taking the time to go through the following, you’ll lay a strong foundation for a great chapter with your team. Be friendly, organized, and efficient in your schedule – get started with the below.

- **Clean and set up desk or work space**
  - Collect swag (if applicable) and include on desk or station setup. New hires love sporting new company gear!
  - Arrange applicable equipment (computer, mouse, keyboard etc.)

- **Introduce your team**
  
  **Pro Tip** — *If you can get everyone together for a team meeting, play a friendly ice breaker. This can ease tension and allow your group to get to know one another without the stress of completing a task or deadline.*

- **Host your first check-in to go over:**
  - The week’s agenda
  - Their role and key responsibilities
    
    **Pro Tip** — *This is a good time to give them a first assignment that they can be thinking about as connections are made.*
  - Typical expectations about work hours, procedures for overtime, use of flexible work policies, vacation and sick leave

- **Take an office tour and highlight:**
  - Fire exits
  - Fire extinguisher
  - Bathrooms
  - Stations for clocking in/clocking out (if applicable)
  - Smoking areas or smoking restrictions (if applicable)
  - First aid areas
  - Supervisor’s office
    
    **Pro Tip** — *As you tour with your new hire, be sure to make introductions in person. It’s always easier to draw connections in real life versus email — creating community is key to retention!*
  - Other locations as they relate to safety procedures
First day check list continued

Technology

☐ Review how to operate telephone systems
☐ Note who to contact for repairs or IT support
☐ Arrange training dates for any new or unfamiliar technologies
☐ Required access codes (if applicable)
  ☐ Point of sale and scheduling software
  ☐ Customer relations training
  ☐ How to log time and attendance for hourly workers (if applicable)
☐ Scheduling procedures and timelines (how to request change in schedule or shifts)
☐ Schedule 30-Day check-in session

Introduce company culture

☐ Assign a buddy
☐ Coordinate a welcome lunch
☐ Compile company information including values, mission, neighborhood or area map, contact information etc.
☐ Review organizational and reporting structure
☐ Explain dress code
☐ Review social media policy (if applicable)
☐ Create a list of who’s who so your new hire knows who they’ll be working with
First week checklist

Use the first week to ensure the proper policies and procedures are learned and absorbed, and to check in that your new hire is getting introduced to the culture and the tools they need.

- Safety training
- Sexual harassment training
- Job training
- OSHA compliance training (if applicable)
- Review of employee handbook and guidelines
- Review of expense policy
- Review of HR point of contact and how to:
  - Request support
  - File a complaint
  - Navigate employee concerns
- Familiarity and comfort with role expectations and responsibilities
- Familiarity with navigating point of sale software, time and attendance procedures
First 30 days check-in

After a month, you and your new employee will have a better grasp on the workplace and working relationships. This is an important time to check in and review assignment completion, any blockers and needs for both employer and employee.

☐ Review and record what’s working well
☐ Review and record what’s not working well or needs attention
☐ Review performance with day-to-day systems and address any concerns
☐ Ensure employee has all necessary equipment, tools or resources required
☐ Examine first project or work product
☐ Solicit feedback from relevant managers and colleagues
☐ Solicit feedback on their onboarding experience and what went well and what could use more attention (and use for future onboarding!)
☐ Schedule 90 day check-in meeting
We’re Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff

Guidelines to implement change in your museum and identify a pipeline of diverse employees.

By Joy Bailey-Bryant

In 2015, the Mellon Foundation released a report that stirred conversation among many cultural workers of color—not because the data was shocking, but because it supported the experiences of many. The study, which quantified the demographic reality of the museum workforce, enumerated the long-felt absence of people of color occupying or in the pipeline for high-level positions in museums, particularly art museums. Here was the quantifiable data, undeniable truth of what workers of color noticed every day. It was both affirming to have evidence and disheartening to see that conversations started years ago and actionized in documents such as AAM’s 1992 publication *Excellence and Equity* had had virtually no lasting effect.

The conversation spread throughout the country. In Washington, DC, at the 2016 AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, I moderated a panel on the topic. The discussion brought together colleagues Omar Eaton-Martinez, intern and fellows program manager at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History; Tracy Lauritzen Wright, director of museum partnerships and compliance at the National Civil Rights Museum; and Sheila McDaniel, deputy director of finance and operations at the Studio Museum in Harlem.

We called the panel and the conversation “We’re Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff” because there are thousands of cultural workers of color, and many of them want to
First 90 days check-in
At this point, creating routine meetings to touch base on employee performance and contentment on the job are critical to retention. Give feedback on how your new hire has been performing and address the following:

Employee work performance
- Are tasks completed on time?
- Are tasks of quality?

What needs improvement
- Consider feedback from other employees and peers
- Consider areas of opportunity to help enhance the employee’s performance

What’s going well
- Tease out a project that they’ve contributed to and highlight their success
- Deliver positive feedback you’ve heard from others
- Ask what they’ve enjoyed working on and weave it into their next 90 days

A look at the next 90 days
- What does the employee need to be aware of in the coming weeks and months?
- [Goal set for how to achieve maximum potential](#)
- Plan for deadlines, initiatives and imminent changes
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We called the panel and the conversation “We’re Not That Hard to Find: Hiring Diverse Museum Staff” because there are thousands of cultural workers of color, and many of them want to
work in or with mainstream organizations. We are here. Whether or not workers of color are given opportunities to rise at cultural organizations depends on the answers to two key questions—the same as with all staff, by the way—what is the organizational or institutional will, and how does that play out in recruitment, hiring, and retention?

Benefits of Diversity
Diverse staff are valuable. As publicly funded institutions, museums have a responsibility to serve their communities. Fostering museums’ shift toward visitor-centric environments takes creativity and change; in turn, hiring diverse staff helps museums innovate and create, and ultimately changes the tenor of the stories we tell.

Studies have identified the creative benefits of working in diverse environments. *Scientific American* has shown that diverse environments fuel creativity, diligence, and hard work. According to the McKinsey Foundation, gender diverse companies are 15 percent more likely to outperform competitors, and those that are ethnically diverse are 35 percent more likely to outperform.

Here are a few guidelines to propel museum leadership forward with making change at their institutions.

The Process of Change
Some cultural institutions and museums, such as the Studio Museum in Harlem—one of the only art museums in the country with a mission centered on artists of the African Diaspora—have been working toward ensuring their workforce is diverse for years. As discussed by museum executive Sheila McDaniel, to make change, leadership must first examine the institutional will to tackle the issue of diversity. There are three basic components of institutional will:

1. **Intention.** Determine what the organization wants to do. Hopefully, recognizing that the world and our communities are diverse, your institution is reflecting on the issue of workforce diversity and wants to make a change. But the reality is that executive or deputy directors may have received a mandate requiring more diversity—whether because of expectations—or requirements—of state, local, or private funders. Regardless of the scenario, it is important to look at the intentions and understand them. The organization needs to be clear about its underlying motivation for creating change.

2. **Commitment.** Once the museum has identified its intention, staff must then identify its commitment. Organizationally, you need to have a strategic conversation about the degree to which you are committed to any initiative. Working toward diversifying your workforce is no different.

3. **Action.** Based on your intention and commitment, you can identify what you are going to do and how you will do it. Use your understood intention and commitment to the issue to evaluate your action plans.

Following these three steps will allow you to address workforce concerns in your own context.

Finding the Candidates
Once institutions recognize the benefits of a diverse workforce, set their intention, and evaluate their commitment, the first step toward taking action is finding candidates. In a study conducted by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, 75 percent of organizations cited a lack of diverse candidates as a major challenge. While this may be the case in some communities, organizations need to commit to proactively identifying such applicants within the pool. Below are strategies for identifying and developing diverse candidates.

- **Partner with educational institutions.** Museums are places of learning. As such, they should partner with outside learning institutions to create a pipeline of staff.

- **Get staff involved.** Diversity already exists in your organization. Invite diverse staff into the process. Ask if they would be interested and able to assist in applicant searches.

- **Maintain access to leadership training.** With proper education, a frontline worker may become the next director of your institution. Empower those who enter the field—on all levels—with training, access to leadership, and opportunities for decision-making roles.

- **Learn to read a resume.** Work with institutional and educational partners to recognize social clues that applicants may have valuable experience. Perhaps an applicant has written articles or publications on topics relevant to diverse collections or has worked with diverse organizations.

- **Prefer paid internships over non-paid.** Compensation allows people from all socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in museum internships and gain that all-important experience. This will facilitate entry into an often closed profession and allow new connections to be created. There are some cultural organizations, such as the National Civil Rights Museum and Lord
Cultural Resources, that only offer paid intern­ships to ensure a more level pool of candidate interest and ability.

- **Create an environment for experimentation.** Give experiential learning space to sometimes get things wrong. Some call it room to try; provide support for staff to make unconventional hiring decisions along with the training that may be necessary.

- **Create mentorship relationships among staff.** Many disdain the idea of an institutional mentoring program. However, such a program can create ties among different levels of staff that might not normally exist. This is especially important when hiring, training, and promoting diverse staff. Some bonds that may normally occur due to affiliations—same alma mater, membership in similar organizations, familiar family background, etc.—may not be present. Reciprocal activity between emerging professionals and those further in their career will benefit both parties as they learn from each other.

- **Cultivate relationships with the community and partners.** It seems like a no-brainer, but many of your best staff will come from the areas right outside your doors. Cultivate relationships with the community and partners in the area who would be interested in working with you.

- **Access existing pools of candidates.** Reach out to organizations such as Museum Hue, where there are existing pools of diverse job seekers.

### Starting at the Top

An example of testing the institutional will from the very top—the board of directors—is offered by National Civil Rights Museum (NCRM) executive Tracy Lauritzen Wright. As a museum focused on a deeply diverse story—the African American struggle for civil and human rights—it is important for NCRM to have a board of directors that reflects the diversity of the community, even if the staff’s diversity is strong.

When the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis faced a renegotiation of its lease agreement with the state of Tennessee, the museum identified two key internal issues:

1. **A gap in the operational budget:** NCRM’s original agreement with the state of Tennessee required very little contribution by the state to the operation of the museum.

2. **A lack of diversity on the board of directors.** In communities where corporations may not have many people of color in leadership, diverse board presence can be a challenge.

To secure new funding resources from the state (five percent of the operating budget), the museum established a memorandum of understanding. Part of the MOU stated that the board must be ethnically and socially diverse to match the Memphis community. Through setting this intention and committing fully to it, the museum has successfully diversified the board.

To ensure the diversity is ongoing, the museum has established a position on the board for a member of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFSCME Local 1733. This ensures a more diverse socioeconomic perspective—giving labor an active place at the table—while historically linking to the organization’s founding: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated at the Lorraine Motel while visiting Memphis to support the sanitation workers’ strike. The museum also has a position on the board for a young person from the community.

### Moving Forward

The diversity of museum professionals decreases further with specialism and seniority, with less than five percent of those in management positions reflecting any type of diversity. There is no doubt that focusing on diversifying institutional and organizational leadership is ongoing and intentional. By examining your institutional will and earnestly following through with intention, commitment, and action toward diverse leadership, you will be well on your way to success.

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**As managing director, Joy Bailey Bryant is responsible for the US operations of Lord Cultural Resources, a cultural consulting firm that provides strategic, business, and community engagement support to cultural institutions, municipalities, developers, and others. Rebecca Frerotte from Lord Cultural Resources provided valuable assistance in the research for this article.**
Barriers to Entry: An Infrastructure of Exclusion in the Museum

Elise Couture-Stone

Aug 5, 2019 · 9 min read

I’ve been wanting to write this article for a while now, but I have been struggling with the content of this particular topic. In part, because it requires me to confront racism in the museum, and my own complicity in shaping policies and hiring practices that have unintentionally created barriers to entry for those of color and non-traditional backgrounds. While non-intentional, this banal negligence, nevertheless, spills out into every aspect of the museum and reinforces antiquated frameworks of restriction and exclusion that have systematically denied women and people of color equal access to the most fundamental of human dignities within the workplace. The ever-complicated stratification system of museum staff, boards of directors, governors, members, donors, and museum-goers complicates the policy-making process and traffics a reticent enemy: racism; sexism; — exclusion.

Our work as museum employees often challenges our visitors to confront their own discomfort, and even abetment on issues of race, gender, sexuality, violence, and economic class. But how often do we, as museum staff, force ourselves to look inward and confront our own discomfort with these topics in relation to how we conduct ourselves in the museum workplace? We work tirelessly to make long invisible histories visible for the public. But in our museum actions, work place practices, policy-making procedures, hiring practices, staff training programs, membership strategies, and paths to advancement, we continue to create barriers to entry in the field that overwhelmingly
exclude a wide range of individuals and perspectives. In turn, this network of defense systems secures a culturally curated, predominantly white, and often affluent — or affluent adjacent — working population. This process of exclusion makes cultural diversity and perspectives nearly invisible in our museum workplace and in the museum work-product.

This article asks the museum community to look at their own complicity in building infrastructures that prevent a wide range of people from participating in the museum experience and that prevent women (in general) from entering the field, leading the field, and staying in the field. Where are your institutions’ specific pinch-points of restriction?

Here are just a few to consider…

**Access to Education**

Access to education disproportionately affects people of color and those outside of the American middle- and upper-class systems and is a systemic issue that plagues all American industries — not just museums. That said, working in the museum or preservation fields often requires multiple higher degrees, which leaves most college attendees swallowed in debt. It is this debt that is barrier number one for entering the museum field.

One of the key elements of building and sustaining a diverse pipeline of applicants is encouraging a wider range of students to enter the humanities fields while in high school. The only way we can encourage this participation is by creating affordable programs where graduates can enter the field without having to sustain crushing debt following graduation. Because as every current museum staffer knows, museum jobs don’t pay! If museums and high-schools, trade-schools, community colleges, and universities, worked more closely together to build affordable programs for a wider-range of students, then the museum applicant pool would be far more diverse than it is today, and may well prove the museum and its contents far more relevant to the communities it serves.

**Language in Job Announcements**

Not too long ago, a long-time friend of mine moved to Boston and started looking for a job. I pointed him in the direction of museums because he has a rich background in
education and thematic-curricular programing. Plus, I thought it would be a great way for him to get to know his new city. After reading a few job postings though, he said, “what on earth does that mean?”, pointing to the first few lines of a job description. Riddled with buzz words and industry-speak, my friend said, “that type language is a red flag for me. If the people there speak like this all the time, then that seems like they might have unrealistic modes of communication, expectations, and are likely have a toxic work environment as a result.” I was so embarrassed. In one job description and new to the field, my friend was able to detect a strong undercurrent of exclusion in the museum workplace.

My friend has years of teaching experience, two post-graduate degrees, and knows American political history well — he would be an asset to any museum or historic site’s education department. But one line repelled him. And it truly is the museum’s loss. How many countless other qualified candidates who read museum job descriptions are put off by the exclusionary and internalized rhetoric we use?

As heritage institutions, we also tend to use binary forms of gendered language in job postings, which equally affects the applicant pool. One of the issues with gendered language is that most people don’t recognize it when they see it — it’s a subtle nuance that most people aren’t in tune with unless they are in a gender studies program or have a personal connection to being excluded in this way (Baldwin and Ackerson 103). According to the blog, Catalyst, the following words tend to reflect the accepted norms of masculine behavior:

Dominant
Boasting
Determined
Lead
Challenging
Competition
Superior
Decisive
Independently
Competitive

While the following list of words tends to represent more universally accepted female characteristics, norms and tropes:

Committed
Connected
Cooperative
Dependable
Interpersonal
Loyal
Responsible
Supportive
Trust
Considerate

So, when a woman reads a job description that is riddled with the aforenoted masculine traits, she is less likely to apply for the position — especially if she identifies keenly with being feminine or female. The kicker is here is, that most leadership positions in the museum field are peppered with langue like this and creates a barrier to entry for anyone who does not identify with these masculine behavioral patterns. The same goes for industry buzz words. All of this langue sends subtle messages about the internal working culture of a museum office and their exclusionary behavioral practices. How do you think someone who identifies as, “they” might respond to these types of job descriptions? We’d likely miss out on their talents as well.
Barrier by Omission

It is not uncommon for museums not to post a job when it becomes available. Instead, we hire internally — cycling through the same outlooks and perspectives. I know this process well, because I was hired from within following an internship, and the moment I accepted the job, while non-intentional, it made me complicit in this type of hiring practice. The museum that hired me in this way, was in the process of being accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), which presumably would promote fair and equitable hiring practices, but that’s not the reality of all AAM accredited museums or their applicants. More often than not, internal candidates are given positions as they become available, which makes it near impossible for qualified candidates to break into the field.

Ok, so let’s say you’re privileged enough to make it through these first three barriers — what happens next?

The (Not-So-Blind) Application Process

What’s in a name? Well, turns out, a lot! While the American Alliance of Museums has gone to great lengths to address this issue and now abides by a blind application process, the American museum industry, as a whole, does not abide by this kind of application process. Which, leaves people of color and people of non-affluent means at a particular disadvantage, further homogenizing the museum workforce. (quick aside. I’d like to point out the exclusionary nature and the irony of some of AAM’s DEI articles — unless you’re a paying member, you can’t read some of their articles on diversity, equity, and inclusionary hiring practices).

The concept of fit is particularly troubling in the museum hiring process, because it focus’ on whether or not one’s personality fits into to current office culture, rather than the skillset for the open position. Those doing the interviewing tend to hire those that are most reflective of themselves and the rest of the team.

Recent research has shown that the museum workforce is not reflective of the broader multi-cultural diversity of the United States, and efforts are underway to change this. But we’re not there yet.

Unpaid Internships
In an interview with Sarah Cascone, writer at news.artnet.com, Michelle Millar-Fisher, founder of Art + Museum, said this about unpaid internships: “When base salaries start at nothing, it has a distinct trickle-up effect on the rest of the field, lowering wages and depressing expectations around compensation as a whole […] Many of us were unpaid interns at one point or another, and we know their tolls personally. The debts accrued and savings delayed affect one’s entire career.”

And she’s right! Assuming one is privileged enough to attend college and take on large swaths of debt, working in a museum also often requires that its workforce work for free in the form of unpaid internships in the beginning of their careers. In order to be able to work for free — especially after having taken on a significant amount of debt for school — one must have access to outside sources of income to be able to meet the basic standards of living. Because not everyone can afford to work for free, unpaid internships filter out anyone of non-affluent means, and ultimately ensures a singularly wealthy, white working population.

During this period of a museum worker’s career, they are often told that the benefit for working for free is two-fold: 1) they are gaining experience that they would not otherwise have the opportunity to earn, do to their lack of practical experience in the field, and 2) they are being exposed to the inner-workings of the museum along with having exposure to powerful people in the museum world. But, as the old adage goes, people die of exposure. The body must be fed, clothed, and have a roof over its head, access to healthcare, childcare (if needed), and reasonable sick leave. Interns, for the most part, are not privy to these resources in the museum because they are not paid workers. But then, paid workers aren’t always privy to these resources either.

**Compensation**

Ok, let’s say you made through the first four hurdles: you’ve taken on two post-graduate degrees or certificates (or both!); you’ve successfully completed two or more internships, flying through the initial application process, and now you’re finally ready to start paying back those student loans and apply for your first paying museum job. Stop right there. It is more than likely that A) you will not be able to pay off your student loan debt working in a museum — prepare to have these loans for the rest of your life. And, B) based on recent statistics put out by the nonprofit National Institute on Retirement Security, if you are a woman (which, in the museum field, you likely are) by
the end of your career, you will likely have earned 25% less than your male peers, who by the way, are more than likely to be less qualified than you are. That’s right ladies! Marry up, or have a sex-change, because in the 2019 museum world, your contribution as woman is still not equal to a man’s and it will negatively impact you for the rest of your life.

Pay equity becomes even more egregious when factoring in race and sexual orientation. According to Joan Baldwin and Anne Ackerson:

“studies point to the fact that lesbian employees earn the same and sometimes more than heterosexual women (which means they are still earning less than heterosexual men) while women of color are frequently paid less than their Caucasian colleagues. Transgender women — if they are hired at all — are the lowest on the salary food chain. Some studies have shown that their wages were almost one third less than their cisgender counterparts” (Baldwin and Ackerson 88).

All of these factors and more work together to weed out those who cannot afford a multifaceted range of degrees and professional certificates.

So what’s the answer? How can we fix this? Conscious construction of policies and a continuous willingness to accept that our overwhelming whiteness poses a threat to the survival of relevancy for the museum in the modern American context. With every non-inclusive policy we enact; with every rigid belief system that we give forbearance to, we continue to chip away at the museum’s relevance to, and reflectiveness of, the communities we are supposed to serve. It’s not all bad though, change is happening. There’s just a lot more work for us to do!

Author’s note:

The American Alliance of Museums puts out a bi-annual report on museum salaries, and does collect data based on race, gender, and sexual orientation. However, the 2017 National Comparative Museum Salary Survey costs $100 (or $20 if broken up into sections) to gain access to this data. And rightly so. This kind of research needs continuous funding! That said, as an independent museum professional, I cannot afford these costs. For the purposes of this essay, I have used the 2014 dataset from this survey,
How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible

November 7, 2018 Greg Thomson

The Employment Standard under the AODA states that employers must make the hiring process accessible to applicants and candidates with disabilities. This may leave people wondering how to make the hiring process accessible. Here we outline how employers can create accessible job postings and provide interview accommodations.

How to Make the Hiring Process Accessible

Accessible Job Postings

Many job-seekers with disabilities look for jobs online. You can make your online job postings accessible for people who use computers differently by ensuring that your business’s website complies with WCAG 2.0 web accessibility standards for layout and content. Companies that comply will ensure that more qualified candidates can find out about and apply for positions.

Distinguishing Essential and Non-Essential Responsibilities

When listing qualifications, you should list essential requirements separately from non-essential requirements. People can better determine whether a job is the right fit for them if they know which skills they must have and which skills might be helpful but are not necessary. For instance, many postings ask that candidates be “team players”, an essential skill for some jobs but not others. This requirement could prevent employers from hiring candidates who have all the core skills a posting asks for but have difficulty interpreting social cues.

Another example is postings that require each candidate to have a valid driver’s licence for jobs that involve travelling. This requirement means that employers miss the chance to interview candidates who do not drive but who are experienced at making alternative travel arrangements. Employers who recognize at this stage which job tasks are essential will also be better prepared to accommodate workers who need to trade non-essential tasks with colleagues, or workers who may need to perform only the essential elements of their jobs during periods of stress or illness. Clarity about which job skills are essential will bring you an applicant pool that is larger, more diverse, and more used to thinking outside the box.
Willingness to Accommodate and Contact Information

Your job posting should state that you welcome applications from people with disabilities. You should also explain who applicants should contact if they need accommodations during the application process. This person or department should be available through multiple communication methods, such as phone and email. This is an easy way of how to make the hiring process accessible.

Accessible Interviews

Accommodations people may request before interviews include:

- An American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter
- A quiet location
- An interview scheduled during a time of day when the applicant is most focused or best able to communicate
- A location accessible for someone using a mobility device
- Advance copies of interview questions
- Good lighting
- Seating arrangements where the candidate can see interviewers clearly

Communication

Applicants who communicate differently will let you know how they will do so. Some communication styles and methods may include:

- ASL interpretation
- Speechreading
- Using hearing aids or Assistive Listening Systems
- Understanding straightforward language instead of figures of speech
- Not making eye contact
- Writing
- Using Augmentative or Alternative Communication (AAC) devices

Some general tips to keep in mind:
• If you are wondering whether a candidate needs help at any stage of the interview process, ask. The candidate may need help and explain what kind or the candidate may not need help.

• Unless an applicant requests otherwise, speak at a normal pace and volume.

• Speak to the applicant directly, not to a support person.

• Do not touch a service animal or mobility device without its owner’s permission.

• If an applicant does not know how much information to offer in response to a question, let the applicant know when you have received enough information or when you need more.

Accessible Interview Formats

Some applicants may request an alternative interview format, such as a telephone interview rather than a face-to-face one, or an interview over Skype instead of the telephone. Applicants who have difficulty thinking and responding quickly may benefit from more time to formulate responses during the interview. Applicants who have trouble answering hypothetical questions or interacting socially might be best able to show their skills in other ways, such as written questionnaires, skills-based tests, or simulations of job tasks.

Disclosure of Disability during Interviews

Interviewers cannot request a medical diagnosis. They also cannot ask questions about an applicant’s disability unless a question relates to how an applicant would perform certain job tasks. Applicants who disclose their disabilities before or during an interview may offer information about disability and accommodations, while others may focus on other aspects of their backgrounds, such as previous work or educational experiences, that they feel are more relevant.

Employers who know how to make the hiring process accessible will have access to a greater pool of qualified and eager applicants. They will also be able to hold successful interviews with workers who choose not to disclose their disabilities, accommodate existing workers who develop disabilities and do more business with customers or clients with disabilities.