

Northeast Ohio nonprofits create new online tool providing racial equity scores for regional job sites

What

Team NEO and the Fund for Our Economic Future, aided by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, Massachusetts, announced Tuesday that they recently launched the "ESG to the Power of Place" tool." The tool is available at wherematters.teamneo.org. Employers, economic developers, and employees can use the new digital tool to measure the workforce's skillsets and racial diversity within a 30-minute commute by car, transit, bike, or walk. It can also be used to analyze the environmental impact of locating a plant in a particular location and the impact of commuting costs on employees. Users can compare up to five different locations by entering addresses into the tool.

So What

A 2018 report completed by the Fund, titled "Two Tomorrows," detailed how Northeast Ohio could combat systemic racial exclusion in employment through new strategies in job creation, preparation and access. Helping businesses and economic development professionals make the best location decisions driven by data could help achieve equity and sustainability goals.

Source:

[Northeast Ohio nonprofits create new online tool providing racial equity scores for regional job sites - cleveland.com](http://www.cleveland.com)

How the metaverse could change work

What?

The metaverse has the potential to drastically change the way we work. Virtual worlds could give us new ways of collaborating in immersive virtual spaces that encourage social connection and team building. Shared virtual spaces would allow us to reinvent the spontaneity of physical presence by allowing more casual conversations when bumping into colleagues. The metaverse may also be home to Artificial Intelligence (AI) advisors and assistants which frees up time for more value-added tasks.

Immersive training and skill development can be enhanced and can reduce the time needed to become proficient with new tools or tasks. AI coaches could allow all employees to receive immediate feedback on their work. Virtual reality role-playing simulations will allow employees to experience realistic scenarios without potential consequences that could arise from interactions with real people.

Some major constraints include the large amount of computing power and electricity needed for the metaverse. As the technology is still relatively new, there are still regulatory and compliance issues that are yet to be resolved. Despite this, it is likely that we will someday see businesses that operate largely or even exclusively in the metaverse.

So What?

As the use of metaverse-like platforms grows in the private sector, the expectations of the workforce may force us to consider how the government can and should use the metaverse both as an employee and as a service provider to Canadians. The public service could be pressured into offering virtual workspaces to meet the demands of the workforce.

If public service begins offering services to Canadian via the metaverse, employees will have to be reskilled to provide services in a virtual world. Offering citizens services on the cloud raises other concerns around security, data, and privacy.

Sources:

[How the Metaverse Could Change Work \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org/2021/03/how-the-metaverse-could-change-work)

Women Don't Feel Included in the Workplace – But Neither Does Anyone Else!

What?

A study and subsequent report, [The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture](#), conducted by Bain and Company surveyed 10,000 individuals to determine their sense of inclusion within the workplace.

We define **inclusion** as the feeling of belonging in your organization and team, feeling treated with dignity as an individual, and feeling encouraged to fully participate and bring your uniqueness to work every day.

BAIN & COMPANY

In the report, approximately **75% of the women surveyed reported feeling excluded in the workplace**. That same group of women who felt excluded, are 3 times more likely quit.

Women who felt included, conversely, revealed that they are 11 times more likely than their counterparts to promote their companies – a key indicator of employee engagement and company results.

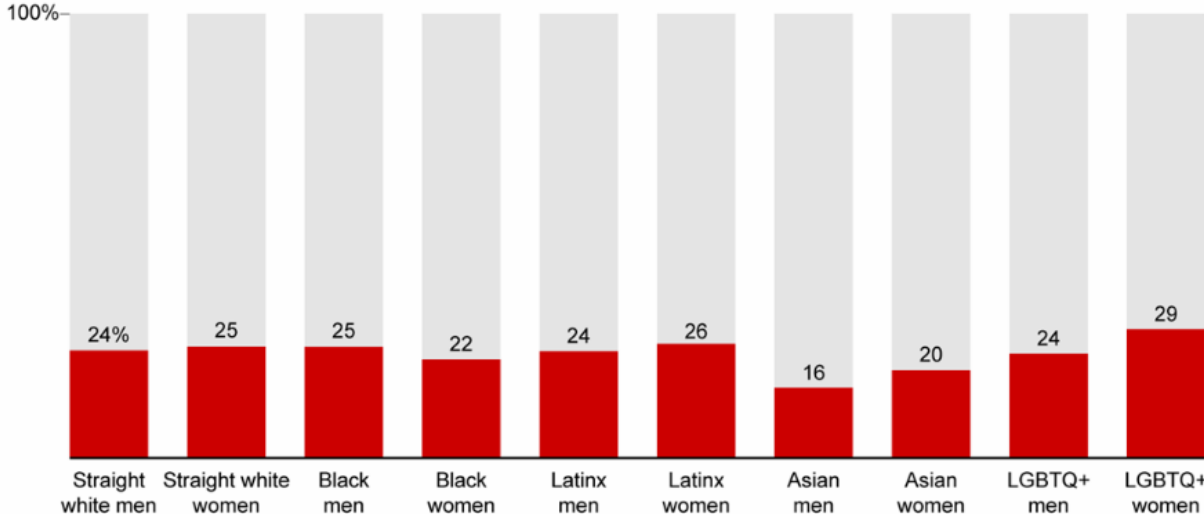
In other words, a person feeling liked and valued, means that person will like and value their organization in turn. Those who don't, won't.

PLOT TWIST:

In the survey, fewer than 30% of ALL employees surveyed felt fully included. Across demographics, most reported **not feeling completely included**. In fact, underrepresented groups did not report feeling significantly less included than majority group (straight white males).

No single demographic variable can cleanly predict who feels included

Respondents who feel fully included, by demographic



Notes: Survey respondents are from US, Canada, Australia, UK, France, Italy, and Germany; respondent ratings, 1-4=low inclusion, 5=somewhat included, 6=moderate inclusion, 7=full inclusion
Source: Bain Inclusive Organization Survey (n=9,494)

Asked to describe what an inclusive organization *looks like*, the wide range of individuals surveyed converged on these points::

LGBTQ+



Straight white men



All racial identities except white



Women



Note: Responses in chart reflect a survey subset of n=5,840
Source: Bain Inclusive Organization Survey (n=9,494)

Though, they differed on what they felt “enabled” inclusion: leadership vs structure vs ritual vs purpose etc.

Those **employees experiencing low inclusion are up to six times more likely to actively pursue new jobs** compared with those in similar demographics experiencing high inclusion.

The Survey found that respondents in a **more inclusive organization are much more likely to feel free to innovate and to feel comfortable challenging the status quo**—and that the gains in creative thinking are much higher as inclusion increases in an organization, compared with the gains from increasing diversity alone.

Respondents who viewed their organizations as both diverse and inclusive were the most likely to feel comfortable bringing new ideas to the table too.

Intersectionality is a new and important element of understanding workplace culture. Not just women and not just women as a general entity, but women of different backgrounds, such as race, ethnicity, or age.

Nuanced support and diverse options for mentorship and pathways is vital to a thriving organization. Across all groups there was a desire to grow and succeed; how one achieves that will vary.

Assumptions

- “Equal Opportunity” will create a feeling of inclusion
- Teams will function the same dispersed as they did in person
- Inclusion is relevant only to minority and marginalized groups

So What?

There’s no surprise here.

Women, minority, and marginalized groups - whether it be by gender identity, ethnicity, race, religion, age, or values - have seldom experienced an optimal sense of value and involvement within the workplace.

Times were thought to be changing. The report suggests differently.

It’s also not only to do with women. Cis-gendered, white men, too, feel excluded in the workplace. A myriad of reasons why.

Now, as remote working normalizes across industry and sector, location and use of technology will intensify the marginalization people - in addition to the failing systems and systemic prejudice and bias that already persists in workplaces.

“Gig unbundling” and “dispersed workforces” challenge the traditional foundations of a successful team dynamic: proximity, intimacy, cooperation, group activities, etc. One can only have so many Zoom costume parties.

Rituals, for example, are a major part of social structures. The way in which groups of people operate informally and naturally is an essential part of team building, cohesion, and inclusivity. Rituals rely on proximity and intimacy and cooperation and group

activities to formulate. Without them, teams are more susceptible to fraying and functioning as individual entities. (The report found employees with both a mentor and close friend felt more included.)

Organizations rushing into new ways of working need be wary of their employees' feelings of inclusion and self-worth. It's easy to sit in one's office and not speak with a soul for days at a time – conversely, the racket in the office has a comforting human effect of being amongst your social group.

Sources

[Bain Report finds women don't feel included in the workplace](#)

[Bain Report: The Fabric of Belonging: How to Weave an Inclusive Culture](#)

Spike in Artificial Intelligence software use to track, monitor employees

What

A challenge with remote working environments has been a “lack of visibility into how employees are spending their time”. This increasing need for transparency and monitoring remote workers had led to the rise in employee tracking and monitoring software called “Bossware”. “Bossware” are AI-based digital platforms or software programs that monitor employee performance and time on tasks. It often lurks in the background of screens watching employees all day to catch (and potentially punish) anyone taking unscheduled breaks. One less invasive example is that of Microsoft’s Productivity Score – an app that provides an entire team with productivity scores and suggestions for improvements. More intense forms consist of logging keystrokes, and even accessing microphone and video functions. Other companies like CultureX, are utilizing AI software to track and measure workplace culture. In this instance, CultureX aims to track workplace culture so that “it’s less toxic, increasing employee work-life balance while decreasing the levels of burnout that lead to turnover”. CultureX uses AI that is made to understand employees’ language.

So What

These monitoring software are becoming more prevalent than ever, and one study estimated that 78% of companies now use some form of employee monitoring software. This has a significant impact on employee privacy, wellbeing, workplace culture, and so on. How might an increasing adoption of such AI impact workplace trust and culture, or employee productivity?

Source:

[CultureX – Culture Solutions](#)

[What Is Bossware? Pros & Cons of Productivity Monitoring Apps | Cloudavize](#)

The Future Of Work At Thumbtack Is Virtual, Library-Style Study Spaces And Camp Outings

What

Thumbtack is a home management platform company that has adopted a remote-first flexible work model after the COVID-19 pandemic. It has adopted a “library” office-style space that mimics a college library, where you can get work done without background noise and interference. These new workspaces won’t be standard, old-school traditional offices. Instead, they’ll serve as individual working areas with the flexibility to join meetings and a way to take a break from being at home. The company plans Thumbtack libraries in San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Manila, Toronto and other cities. As the company launches new locations, the intriguing concept offers two unique features: one to host larger gatherings and socialise, and the other dedicated to day-to-day independent work. Thumbtack also plans to regularly bring teams together for events and offsites for teamwide or project-specific meetings.

So What

More companies like Thumbtack are looking to provide unique value propositions to their employees. Employers and employees are currently co-designing the future work environments to be flexible, equitable and inclusive. Employees in the future will have more freedom to decide where and how they want to live and work.

Source:

[The Future Of Work At Thumbtack Is Virtual, Library-Style Study Spaces And Camp Outings \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com)