

# The DEI Advantage

Dispelling Misconceptions &  
Achieving Organizational Success

SCORE Los Angeles  
November 13, 2024



# Luiza Dreasher

## Brazilian by Birth, Multicultural by Choice





# My Passion Being a Connector

# Agenda

- Understanding DEI
- The Importance of DEI
- Definitions
- The Many Layers of Diversity
- Why Organizations Need to Focus on DEI
- New Ways of Leading
- A Roadmap for Countering Pushback
- Closing | Main Takeaways | Q&A

# Understanding DEI



DEI

DEIB

DEIA

DEIJ

DEI+

DIB

DI&E

JEDI

DEIM

EDI

IDEA

ID&E

# DEI Acronyms

# Despite the Confusion, There is No Denying the Importance of DEI

- From 2014 – 2016, Google spent \$265 million to increase their diversity numbers.
- 2017 survey of tech employees showed that 72% reported that DEI was important to their company.
- In a survey of 700 startup founders, 45% of respondents reported that they talked about DEI internally in the last year.
- According to Deloitte, 73% of Gen Z and 68% of Millennials view DEI as essential.



# Recent Report from Seramount

Despite the pushback, research shows that **the overwhelming majority of the world's leading companies** remain committed to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

# Recent Report from Seramount

**91%** of those participating in a survey of C-suite members indicated that the recent SCOTUS AA decision **did not cause their organization to deprioritize DEI**

# Recent Report from Seramount

- **In its annual meeting, The World Economic Forum (WEF) reiterated the importance of DEI.**
- **The world's brightest minds in business, politics, academia, and civil society still see DEI as crucial.**



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

# Definitions

**D**iversity

**E**quity

**I**nclusion



# Diversity

The presence of different identities within the organization (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, etc.).





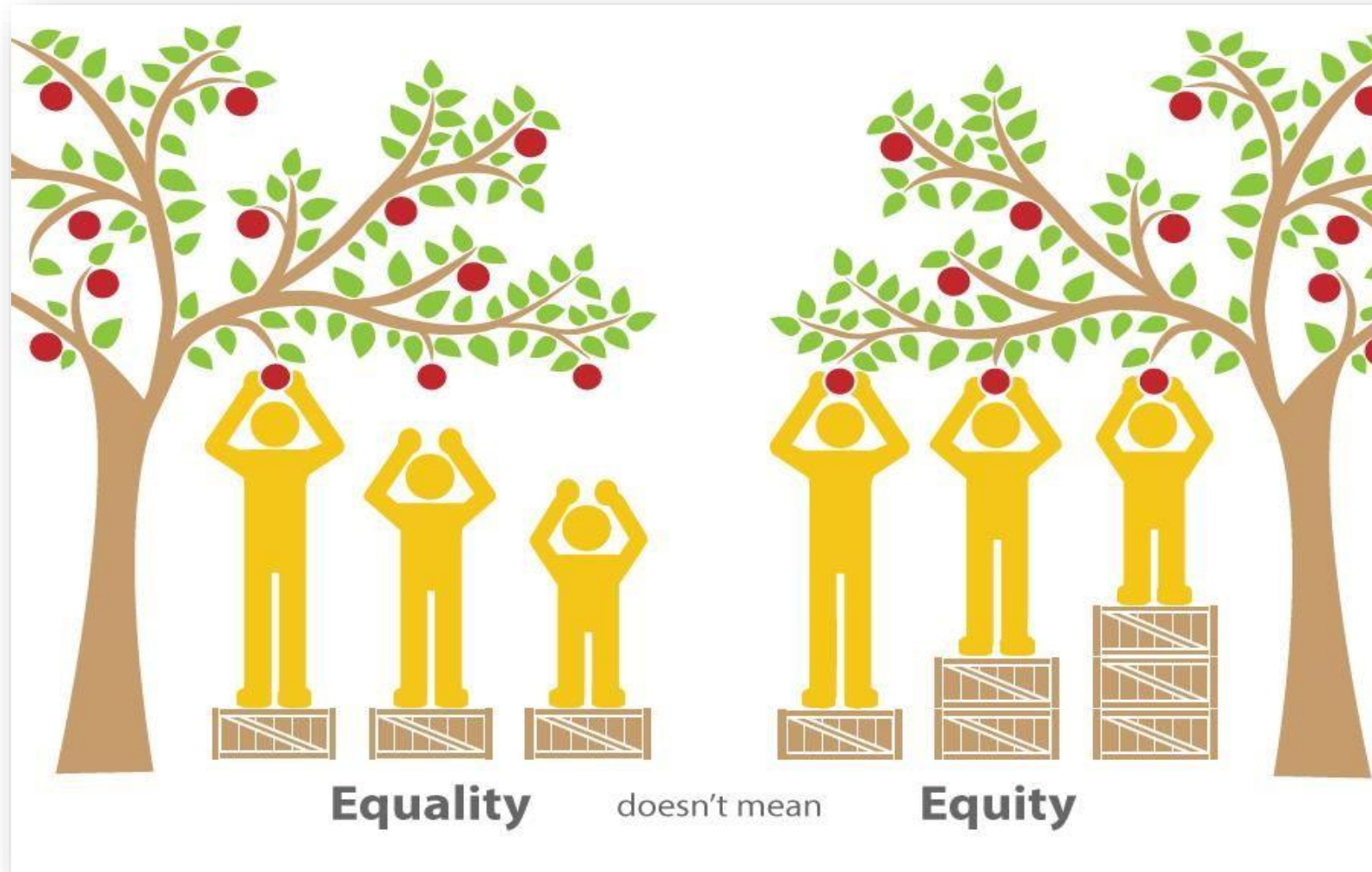
# Equity

- An approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities.
- It recognizes that barriers exist and, as result, not everyone starts from the same place.
- It is a commitment to address the imbalances.

# Keep in Mind



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES





**EVERYONE  
MATTERS**

## Inclusion

When **ALL individuals**, regardless of their identity, feel valued, respected, and welcomed within the organization.



# The Many Layers of Diversity

***Personality***

Source: [grandenswartzrowe.com](http://grandenswartzrowe.com)



# The Many Layers of Diversity

## *Internal Dimensions*

Source: [grandenswartzrowe.com](http://grandenswartzrowe.com)



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

# The Many Layers of Diversity



***External Dimensions***

***Organizational Dimensions***

Source: [grandenswartzrowe.com](http://grandenswartzrowe.com)



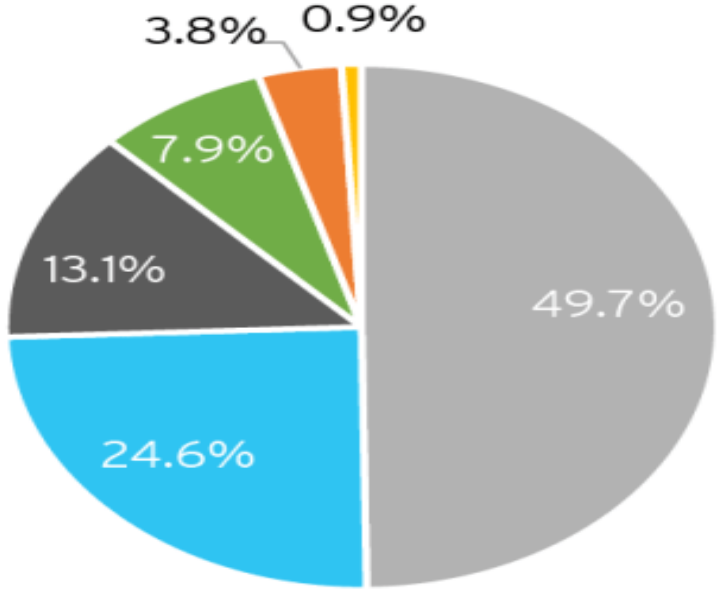
**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

# Why Organizations Need to Focus on DEI



FIGURE 1

Racial profile of U.S. population, 2045



White\* Hispanic Black\* Asian\* Multiracial\* Other\*

\* Non-Hispanic members of race

Source: William H Frey analysis of U.S. Census population projections released March 13, 2018 and revised September 6, 2018

**B** Metropolitan Policy Program at BROOKINGS



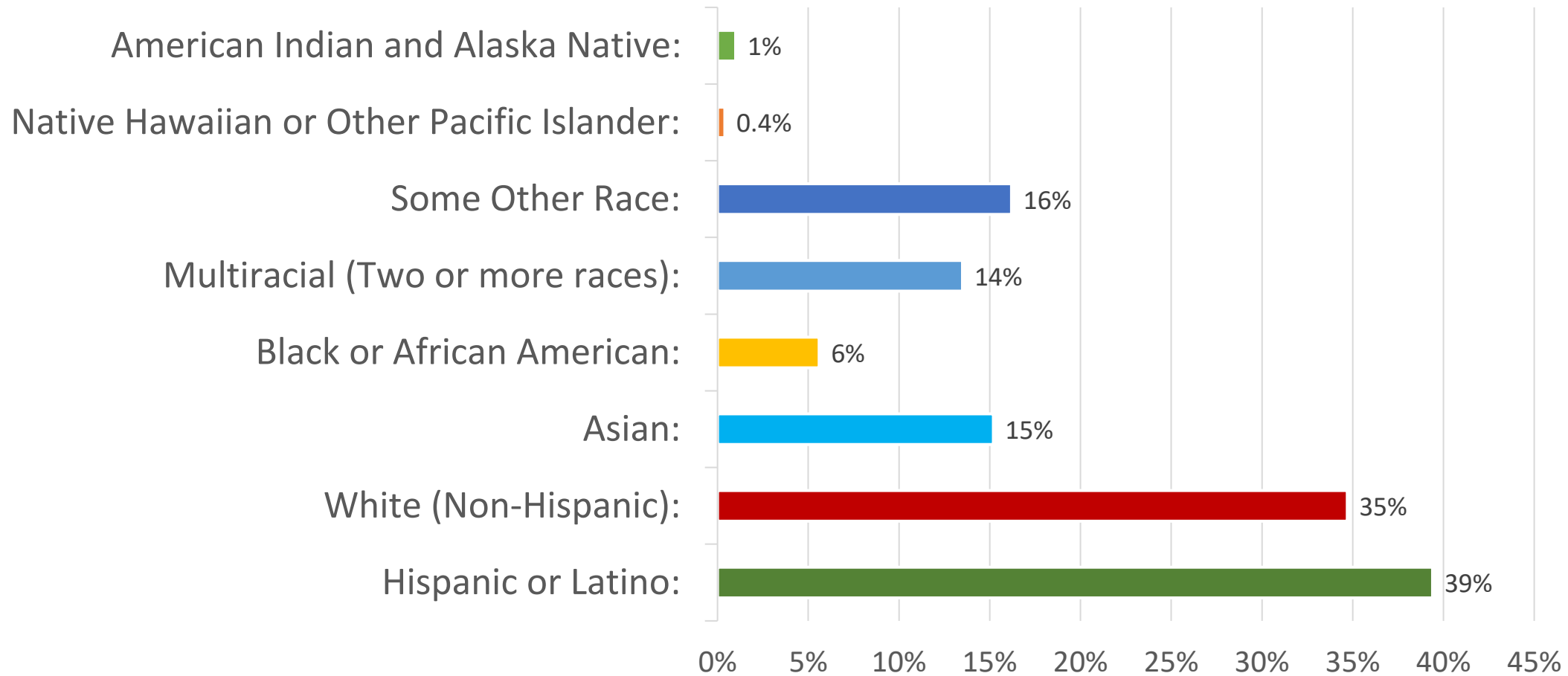
# 1) Demographic Changes





**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

# California Racial and Ethnic Composition - 2020 Data





**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



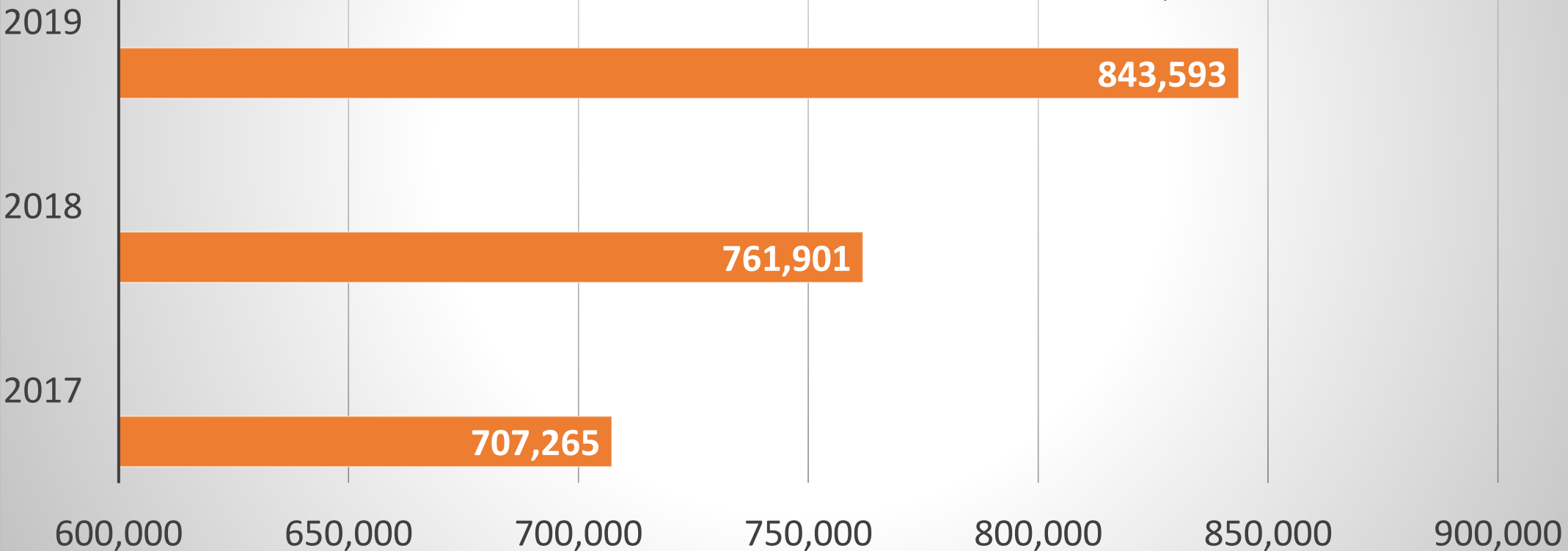
## 2) Immigration

# Naturalization in the United States



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

## Individuals Being Naturalized





**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In the United States, several industries rely heavily on foreign workers



# For Example:

**Agriculture** is highly dependent on foreign labor, especially for seasonal work such as harvesting fruits, vegetables, and other labor-intensive crops.

Many agricultural workers come on H-2A visas, specifically for temporary or seasonal farm work.



# For Example:

**Healthcare**, including nursing, home health aides, and medical technicians, depends on foreign professionals, especially in rural areas or underserved communities.

The sector also recruits doctors, pharmacists, and other healthcare professionals to fill shortages in critical medical services.



# For Example:

**Construction companies** increasingly rely on foreign labor to meet demand in both residential and commercial building.

This includes roles such as laborers, electricians, masons, and carpenters.

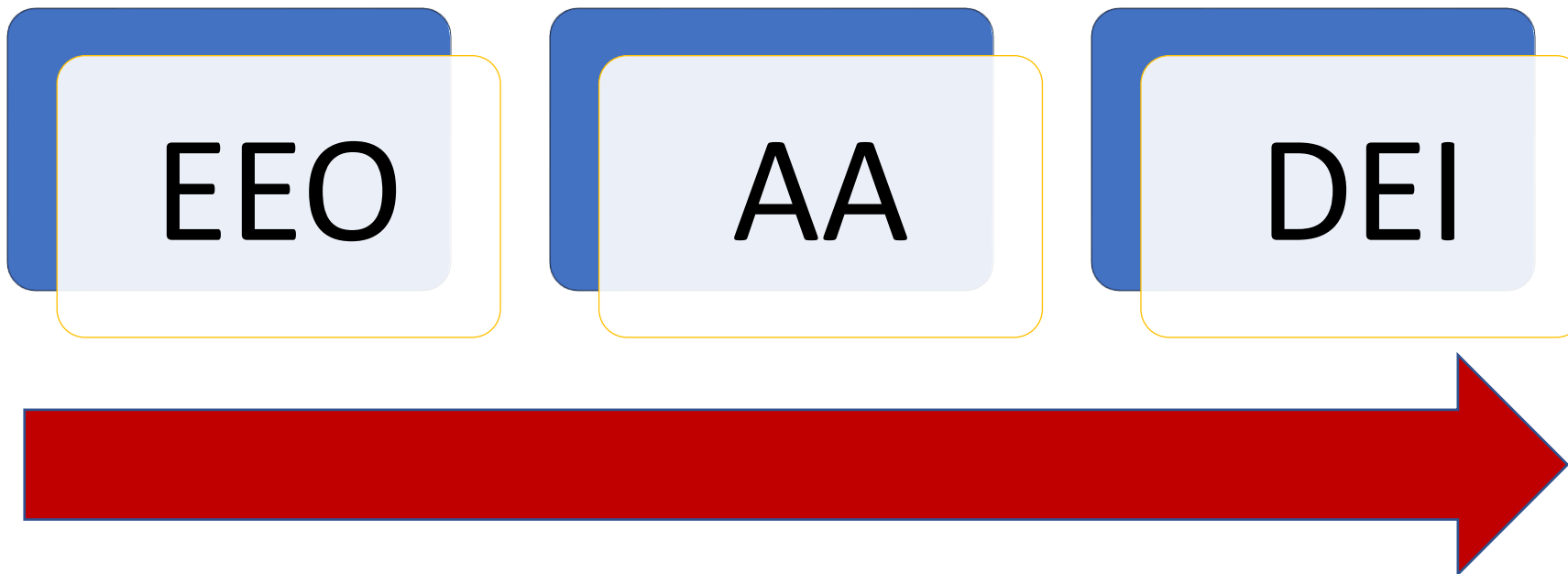
***The industry relies on temporary and undocumented labor **due to shortages of domestic workers in these fields.*****



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES



# New Ways of Leading



# Equal Employment Opportunity

- Government-mandated regulations (Civil Rights Act of 1964).
- Equal opportunities in hiring, development, and promotion for protected-class individuals.



# Affirmative Action (AA)

- Signed by Lyndon Johnson in 1965.
- Required the development of **goals and strategies** for hiring and promoting protected classes.
- Became synonymous with quotas or numerical benchmarks.
- Problem: Little to no attention to how individuals were treated once they were hired.
- The old “melting pot” mentality prevailed.



# Inclusion-Focused Management

- Came about because while recruitment of protected classes increased, retention did not.
- Organizations realized that bringing diversity in was not enough. They had to create “inclusive” environments—places where differences are recognized and respected.
- **Payoff of inclusion:** Fewer lawsuits, lower turnover, and higher productivity.

**Valuing differences can indeed lead to more  
productive and profitable workplaces.**

## Old Model

## New Model

**Golden Rule:** Treat everyone the way I want to be treated.

**Platinum Rule:** Treat everyone the way *THEY* want to be treated.

**Assimilation:** You do all you can to “fit in.”

**Recognizes and accepts differences:**  
There are many ways to think, behave, and act; none is inherently better than the other.

**Differences = less than**

**Differences = value added**

Push for conformity in norms, thinking and behavior.

Greater accommodation to individuals' needs.



# How to Counter the Pushback

## A Roadmap

# Strategy 1: Understand Who You Are Working With

## Resistor 1

- Those who are deliberately spreading misinformation for political gains.
- They are intentionally biased.
- They approach diversity with an “*us vs. them*” mentality.
- However, it is important to listen to their concern. **This is how you start building an inclusive workplace that benefits everyone.**

# **Strategy 1:** Understand Who You Are Working With (cont'd)

## **Resistor 2**

- Those who don't fully understand what they're opposing.
- They don't know what DEI is.
- They believe DEI solely benefits nonwhite individuals, which means they feel excluded.
- They fear they will no longer be treated fairly.
- They need to be taught that effective DEI is about **EVERYONE** in the organization.
- They also need to understand the **BUSINESS CASE** for DEI. This is how you can change their minds.

## **Strategy 2:** Reframe the Narrative in a Way That Everyone Understands

- Start by demonstrating the positive impact of DEI.
- Create a compelling and clear message showing how employees and the organization benefit.
- If you start by demonstrating the business case for DEI, they will start seeing that DEI has a direct link to business outcome.

# **Strategy 3:** Create Opportunities for Constructive Conversations

- You need to acknowledge people's concerns and start engaging with them in an open and respectful dialogue.
- Create opportunities to
  - a) Educate
  - b) Address misconceptions
  - c) Combat misunderstandings and negative perceptions of DEI
  - d) Start building crucial support among those who are curious but may not fully grasp the complexities of DEI
  - e) Again, keep emphasizing how DEI is business critical**

## **Strategy 4:** Focus on the Movable Middle

- Stop focusing on the extremes: the allies and those opposed to DEI.
- The key to success lies in engaging the movable middle – the largest segment of the workforce.
- Tailor your approach to resonate with their values and concerns.
- Your goal should be to find a common ground, build consensus, and make DEI more “palatable” to start with.

## **Strategy 5:** Be Strategic about Your DEI Roadmap

- DEI must be data driven.
- Leverage data to combat misinformation and demonstrate the positive impact of DEI.
- Be prepared to address concerns and anxieties.
- Ensure that DEI is about creating a culture of equity and inclusion for ALL.
- Frame DEI in terms of tangible business benefits and values:
  - Improved market access
  - Enhanced product and service quality

# **Above All:** Stop Arguing Over Labels and Focus on What Really Matters

- Highlight the benefits.
- Focus on the positive impact.
- Show measurable progress.
- Move away from the abstract (acronyms, definitions, etc.) and from “strawmen arguments.” Share stories and real experiences.

# Which Strategy Could You Start With? Anything Else You Would Try?

**Strategy 1:** Understand Who You Are Working With

**Strategy 2:** Reframe the Narrative in a Way That Everyone Understands

**Strategy 3:** Create Opportunities for Constructive Conversations

**Strategy 4:** Focus on the Movable Middle

**Strategy 5:** Be Strategic about Your DEI Roadmap



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

# Now What?

## Closing Thoughts



# As a CEO

## Question 1

*What kind of organization do you want to create?*



# As a CEO

## Question 2



*What kind of leader do you want to be?*

# How Do You Want to Be Seen as a Leader?

- Fair
- Compassionate
- Caring
- Curious
- Someone who is willing to listen
- Someone who deeply cares about each and every employee
- Someone who takes the time to get to know them, understand what they are going through, what burdens they are carrying

# I Am Asking You:

- Do you know what your employees are going through?
- Do you know how they are experiencing the organization?
- Do they feel valued, respected?
- Do they feel their contributions matter?
- Are they fully engaged? If not, do you know why not?



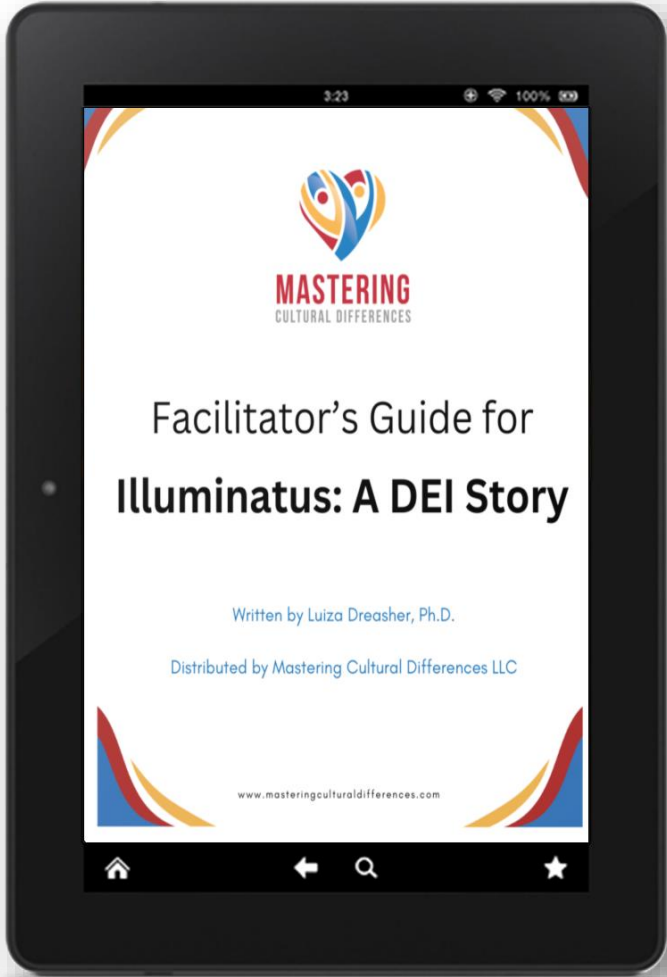
# The Two Questions You Need to Ask Yourself

- What kind of organization do you want to create?
- What kind of leader do you want to be?

# Free Resources



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES





# Connect With Me

## **Email:**

[luiza@masteringcuturadifferences.com](mailto:luiza@masteringcuturadifferences.com)

## **LinkedIn:**

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/luiza-dreasher-phd/>

## **Subscribe:**

<https://www.masteringculturaldifferences.com/dei-plus-newsletter>

<https://www.linkedin.com/newsletters/building-better-workplaces-7237842108579995648>



***When you left for work this morning, what did you leave behind?***

***Your opinions?***

***Your background?***

***Your earring?***

***Your tattoos?***

***Your natural hair?***

***Your native language?***

***Your partner?***

***Your culture?***

***Your politics?***

***Your sexual orientation?***

***Your race?***

***Your personality?***

***Your ability?***

***Your uniqueness?***

***Your accent?***

***Yourself?***



**MASTERING**  
CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Adapted from PricewaterhouseCoopers