

ETHNIC INCLUSION & ALLYSHIP

CREATING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION BY GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD.

'Tell me Anything' sessions



Introduction

'Tell me Anything' sessions are a powerful opportunity for decision-makers and leadership to better understand the perspectives of under-represented groups within your organisation. Unlike reverse or reciprocal mentoring, they offer a high-impact way for decision-makers within the business to listen to a diverse population of people which might share similar lived experiences, and from different parts (or a targeted part) of the organisation. The sessions help share different perspectives of the organisation or directly feedback on a company initiative, targets or goals.

Objectives

The key objectives of 'Tell me Anything':

- Understand lived experiences of under-represented groups by listening to personal experiences
- Giving under-represented voices a forum to speak about their perspectives and challenges

ETHNIC INCLUSION & ALLYSHIP

CREATING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION BY GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD.

- Brainstorm and innovate around ways to achieve company targets, action plan objectives and help the business achieve its goals around values and an inclusive culture.
- Engage executives or board members in understanding different lived experiences.
- Motivate senior individuals into action to help partake in the organisation's inclusivity plans.
- Promote a culture of empathetic listening to understand difference.
- Optional: Can be used to feedback on initiatives and key measures, strategy, organisational values, culture and policy and procedures

Preparation

A clear communication plan is essential, which outlines the objectives for participants:

- The more information on offer about what outcomes you are trying to achieve, will help transparency and provide better outcomes.
- Communicate this is a confidential, safe space forum, giving the opportunity to give open, honest and constructive feedback. All contributions will be used anonymously to help drive change.
- Give an outline of themes or questions that will be asked so participants can come prepared.
- Consideration needs to be given to ensure psychological safety of participants who may have had negative experiences and how these areas will be handled.
- Communicate the organisations goals and how these sessions will support driving positive change and aligning to those goals.
- Communicate next steps, what feedback will participants be given?

Selecting participants

Keep in mind objectives when selecting participants, utilise the organisation's multicultural network or similar and get their input into communications and structure where needed. Use clear communication to promote the sessions, these have proven to be more effective if the participation is voluntary.

Format of the session

Formulate clear session outline, structure, agenda and handouts.

Develop the structure based on objectives and share areas where the organisation has identified barriers or needs support. Use data, surveys, and other feedback from listening sessions to help drive the discussion.

Duration: 60-90 minutes (preferably in person if possible)

Number of participants for each session (one senior leader): 4-8

Using a facilitator can help introduce, manage the dynamics and direct questions at participants equally to encourage meaningful discussion. If the facilitator is an internal member of staff, it has been seen to be more effective if the session is facilitated by a person from the same under-represented identity as the participants.

Introduction to the session

Ensure that the introduction helps to foster an open forum. Include objectives, re-enforce that this is a safe space to better understand lived experiences and different perspectives from inside the organisation and help understand how to drive positive change.

- Each participant introduces themselves and area of business.
- Decide if you want to begin with an icebreaker style opening where each participant is asked a general question about themselves

Initial areas to discuss (organisation):

ETHNIC INCLUSION & ALLYSHIP

CREATING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION BY GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD.

Begin the discussion with less personal questions and instead ask questions that gather feedback on the organisation. Expand on asking further questions where needed.

For example:

- Our data shows lack of representation in senior positions, we'd like to explore why you think this is the case?
- Through our engagement survey a lower proportion of ethnic minority colleagues said they felt they belong to the organisation. Why do you think this is?

Exploring Lived Experiences:

Move on to understanding feedback on lived experiences working for the organisation.

For example:

- We've identified that forms of discrimination known as microaggressions within our customer facing teams, do you have any personal experiences of this type of discrimination?
- We are struggling with retention for ethnic minority colleagues, and need to better understand how to promote a better inclusive culture, can you tell me about your experiences of working for the organisation?

Challenge barriers and support progress:

Finally, focus the discussion on listening to proposed solutions

For example:

- What would help overcome these barriers and support you and your career progression?
- What would help our organisation become more inclusive? Or provide a better culture?
- We have had feedback that there isn't fair access to stretch assignments, talent programmes and similar opportunities and we'd like to explore this further and your thoughts on what would help?

Conclusion and next steps

Explain any follow up and next steps.

Follow up

Ensure there are clear outcomes and next steps. This will include a commitment from the senior leader. If there are multiple sessions being run with a cohort of senior leadership, collaborate on findings. Share output themes and/or a commitment from leadership as a resulting action planned.

Plan a follow up session with the same cohort to check in on any updates, follow up on actions and feedback on progress. This will help to bring participants on the journey and further engage and foster a culture of belonging.

Matrix sections:

AE1 /

Understanding

Give executive and senior teams the opportunity to hear lived experiences by initiating listening groups.

To improve understanding for individuals in senior management, listening groups are facilitated sessions where ethnically diverse colleagues will share their experiences. (ED4)

ADVANCED Insights

ETHNIC INCLUSION & ALLYSHIP

CREATING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION BY GETTING EVERYONE ON BOARD.

ED3 /

Retention

Hold a series of focus groups or listening sessions to better understand the lived experiences of ethnically diverse employees. Use the outputs to inform your strategy and back up areas where data is showing under-representation.

In effect, this is a miniature culture audit. The groups should be open to all levels and feedback should be anonymous. They should help to identify the barriers to progression and any issues that exist. A report should be formed using findings from the groups, which should contribute to an action plan or overall strategy.

START

Insight

Strategy

Data

ED4 /

Retention Ensure listening groups are hosted by executives.

This will help executives understand the issues and enable them to hear lived-experiences from colleagues directly. (Follow on: AE1)

ADVANCED

Insight

Strategy

Leadership