Igniting a Dialog About Diversity and Inclusion in the Security Industry



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Diversity and inclusion (D&I) in the security industry is an evolving topic. A natural part of our corporate culture is to offer all employees the same opportunity to excel – regardless of race, gender, cultural background or other differentiating factors.

I'm often asked why terms "diversity" and "inclusion" are so regularly used together. The way I see it, diversity is getting people to the table and inclusion is having them eat the meal with you. You simply cannot have one without the other and why would you want it to be any other way? Forward-thinking companies providing security solutions are starting to understand the unlimited and widespread benefits diversity and inclusion bring to their businesses.

Change in the right direction

Research shows diversity and inclusion can have a positive impact on personal growth and development, as well as business performance and outcomes. Our industry has its roots in law enforcement and the military, so it has been traditionally male dominated. As the make up of our partners and end users changes to be more diverse, we should have a workforce that matches it.

According to a study by Psychology Today, diverse employees who feel included are up to four times more likely to have a higher sense of well-being compared to those who don't feel included.

Furthermore, there is evidence that diversity and business success are uniquely linked. In a report published by McKinsey, a global management consulting firm, it was noted that organizations that sit in the top quartile for gender, ethnic or racial diversity are 35 percent more likely to see financial returns above the median for their respective industry.

When a workforce is diverse and inclusive in their representation – the workplace wins, but so do individuals who feel a sense of belonging and pride. Workforce diversity can bring about an increase in productivity and competitive advantages. Employers can offer more solutions to their partners because of new, fresh ideas (Johnson, R., 2019). Diversity does not just apply to gender. We have four

generations in our workforce and half of that workforce is made of millennials – there is so much to be learned from working with multiple generations!

Igniting the dialogue even more

With our colleagues, partners and customers, we work to create a smarter, safer world with our solutions and technologies. Communication is key in each of these relationships. Creating novel solutions for our customers will always include the power of dialogue amongst individuals who bring different perspectives and opinions to the table.

Security is not a solo profession; it is broad and is based on the synergy of many factors: people, legislation, current events, trends, and available technology all of which allow us to reach a common goal. Having a diverse workforce can provide different perspectives on fundamental risk-related processes, be they frontline services or across technology domains (McCloskey, A., 2019).

How do you get started increasing diversity and inclusion in your organizations?

- Take it one step at a time. A slow start is better than no start.
- Engage your employees. Ask for volunteers to form a diversity and inclusion committee.
- Establish D&I goals for your organization and make sure they align with your company's strategy. For example, do you want to increase the number of diverse employees on your management team? Commit to having a least one diverse candidate in your next interview process.
- Create a calendar of dates/initiatives for the year that relate and promote your internal D&I strategy. An event, training, or discussion on a quarterly basis is a great start.
- Measure your success. Establish some basic metrics so you can track progress. For example, male to female ratio per department. Consider re-writing your job postings so that they are attractive to diverse candidates. There are many tools available for this.
- Anticipate some of the questions or pushback you may receive from individuals. What can you and your team do to prepare some sound bites?

Another initiative we are driving is engaging students at both the college and high school level. We have an active summer internship program and many of our interns have converted to permanent positions upon graduation. We also focus on engaging high school students and showing them the benefits of working in our industry. College recruiting programs are good, but by the time we meet students in the final years of college, they may have already made their career decisions. We frequently invite groups of students to come in and meet some of our employees and learn about our technology.

Growing together

Successful organizations are focused on cultivating and maintaining a welcoming and positive workplace culture. Your organization's values and culture can be your competitive advantage. Having a diverse workforce helps. Adding D&I initiatives to your organization's success is seen to increase creativity, productivity, and communication internally and externally. Having diverse teams working in every function of the company is crucial to drive innovation as far as it will go. After all, if everyone comes from the same background and thinks in the same way, how do you expect to get fresh ideas?

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