



AMTC

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News

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— ANGELA TURNER

AMTC News

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The Power of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI). Every person counts, all stakeholders—we live this. AMTC & Associates understands that outcomes are most powerful when our clients and the individuals they serve feel valued and when their staff is inextricably bound to the success of their clients. Our clients live this way of life too. Even so, DEI requires ongoing reflection, goal-setting, and action steps, which is why we recently offered a DEI workshop.

Lori Rolleri is a thought leader in DEI and led the workshop, guiding us to expand our DEI effectiveness. On page two, we offer a few of the insights that were learned during the workshop, starting with the different definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, Rolleri explained how DEI benefits everyone, what it takes to maintain it long-term, and the steps an organization might take to expand this practice.

On page three, we learn from Cheri Tillis, the acting CEO of **Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC)**, St. Louis, Missouri, that DEI is the foundation upon which FFSC

carries out its work. In this article, we also gain a greater appreciation of DEI in the context of practical, everyday applications.

On the last page of this newsletter, I invite you to learn about our newest associate, Michele Serwe. She brings an enormous amount of experience and knowledge to AMTC, after serving for more than 25 years in multiple capacities in the business field. We are fortunate to have her, and of course, grateful for all our clients and their incredible work. Thank you to all of our stakeholders.

Wishing you good health,

Angela Turner
Principal





WORKSHOP BUILDS DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

The words “diversity,” “equity,” and “inclusion” (DEI) are more than buzzwords—they are foundational to the success of organizations and the individuals they serve. With this in mind, Lori Rolleri, a thought leader in DEI and an evaluation consultant for AMTC & Associates, led a workshop for AMTC clients to strengthen DEI and deeply embed it into their work.

First, the basics: what is the difference between diversity, equity and inclusion?

- **Diversity:** Factors one can “count,” like race, ethnicity, gender identity, religion, nationality and sexual orientation.
- **Equity:** Actions a community takes to distribute resources, opportunities, and rewards fairly, and sometimes to compensate for historical and/or social disadvantages.
- **Inclusion:** How people of different identities feel valued, engaged and welcomed in a given setting.

What are the benefits of DEI? Turns out, a lot. According to Rolleri, DEI greatly enhances the workplace and the individuals they serve, with greater levels of employee engagement, higher job satisfaction, stronger peer relationships, expanded client bases, greater innovation and more. The bottom

line is that DEI translates into an organization that functions better, thereby producing greater service outcomes.

However, reaching this level of DEI is not accomplished by mere talking points; rather, it takes a leadership commitment and concerted effort by every single person in an organization, clear DEI goals and accountability, and the development and application of DEI policies and protocols.

It starts with a process that delves deeply into the beliefs and experiences of an organization’s own staff, so Rolleri utilized metaphorical images, videos, and podcast sound clips for participants to react to and discuss with others. To illustrate, participants listened to an employee of a major tech firm, who as a minority felt compelled to “fake it” in order to fit into the dominant culture. This resonated with many workshop participants, which brought up a wide range of issues to address within the framework of DEI.

Focusing on DEI is also significant to funders. According to Rolleri, it demonstrates an organization’s desire to make a deeper impact. Diverse perspectives and experiences are organizational assets.

Lori Rolleri can be reached at lorigrolleri@gmail.com.

DEI Planning Steps

STEP 1: Prepare

Assess whether or not you are ready to begin a DEI planning process.

STEP 2: Conceptualize

Develop DEI goals and objectives, as well as a workplan.

STEP 3: Implement

Communicate your plan to staff and other relevant stakeholders, orient and train staff as needed and put the DEI plan into action.

STEP 4: Monitor & Evaluate

Establish success indicators, identify what data you will need to determine whether or not you are meeting the DEI goals and objectives you set in Step 1, and decide how you will gather these data. Also plan how you will use the data you gather to affirm best practices for your organization and to make improvements.

STEP 5: Communicate

Recognize and communicate the outcomes of your DEI efforts to staff and other stakeholders.

STEP 6: Institutionalize

Identify ways to institutionalize best DEI practices within your organization.

Thanks to Lori Rolleri for permission to share these steps.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

at the CORE



Cheri Tillis, acting CEO,
Fathers & Families Support Center

“All of our projects were developed under a lens of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI),” said Cheri Tillis, acting CEO of **Fathers & Families Support Center (FFSC)**, serving St. Louis City and County, Missouri. “Since our inception, we’ve made equity and inclusion a priority.”

The mission of FFSC is to foster healthy relationships by strengthening families and communities. By providing fathers with an array of educational programs and services, such as how to build healthy relationships, gain skills for employment, develop financial literacy, and much more—with DEI at its core, FFSC remains a leader in the field.

FFSC intentionally operates within the communities of greatest need. “We are neighbors,” said Tillis. This is an equitable practice; participants who need the services most have access. Imparting knowledge is also a component of equity. Some fathers do not yet know how to navigate the court system and obtain visitation rights; the program empowers fathers to do just that. FFSC also teaches vocational skills, allowing participants to find

jobs that support their families, another example of how “knowledge equity” translates into real-life outcomes.

Inclusion is another tenet. The atmosphere is nonjudgmental, noted Tillis, “Our only goal is to make sure you’re successful once you cross that threshold... and we’re always going to have their best interest at heart,” i.e., participants feel valued and welcomed. Curricula and services are adapted to meet the needs of each individual. Individualized approaches mean “they’re here for me”; This environment fosters relationships, and trust becomes a measurement of success. “A lot of participants have expressed that they have made friends [in the program] who they can trust.” said Tillis. “Oftentimes they look to our facilitators as mentors.”

Diversity is reflected in staff. “The participants we serve almost mirror the staff that we have.” Accurate representation is reflected in the curricula, too. “We are one of a few fatherhood organizations that use a curriculum model informed by diversity and inclusion,” emphasized Tillis.

Inequality
Unequal access to opportunities

Equality?
Evenly distributed tools and assistance

Equity
Custom tools that identify and address inequality

Justice
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities

Understanding the Issue

For more information, visit <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>.

Source: Tony Roth, illustrator, featured in John Maeda, “Addressing Imbalance,” *Design in Tech Report 2019*, https://designintech.report/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/dit2019_v00.pdf.

Meet our *Associates*

Our diverse team delivers fast, relevant results for our clients. Here is one individual who contributes to those efforts.



MICHELE SERWE
LEADERSHIP, TALENT, AND
ORGANIZATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

“To elevate organizational effectiveness, it is essential to live and work in a manner that places people at the center of everything we do.”

– Michele Serwe

What is your educational background?

Master of Science, Counselor Education (MSE) from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and Bachelor of Science, Business Administration (BSA) from Cardinal Stritch University.

Please name a few prior professional experiences.

Having held senior-level roles in a variety of corporate settings, across multiple businesses, I have positively impacted multiple aspects of talent management, including succession planning, change leadership, merger/acquisition integration, divestiture support and strategic business development.

How many years have you been involved in this type of work?

More than 25 years.

What are your specific areas of focus/duties for AMTC?

Helping AMTC and its clients optimize organizational effectiveness through excellence in people strategy, including development in the areas of leadership, talent and organizational culture.

The topic of this newsletter is diversity, equity and inclusion. What is your role in this area?

To elevate organizational effectiveness, it is essential to live and work in a manner that places people at the center of everything we do. This means honoring people, welcoming differing perspectives and fostering an

environment in which people feel a sense of belonging and thrive.

Regarding everything you do for AMTC, what do you find meaningful about your work?

Making a difference every day by helping people and organizations be the best they can possibly be.

What have been your greatest accomplishments thus far with AMTC?

Enabling strong, effective communication strategies.

What have you learned by being involved with AMTC?

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the clients we serve, their mission and purpose. Individually and collectively, AMTC and its clients are touching people's lives and making a true difference in the world.

Moving forward, what do you hope to accomplish?

Deliver top-tier organizational effectiveness solutions to help AMTC and its clients meet their business aspirations and objectives.

Outside of work, what do you enjoy?

Faith, family, and learning are the most important aspects of my life. Nearly everything I do outside of work is in some way connected to this foundation, including reading great books, listening to beautiful music, and watching original, independent films.