

### CHAPTER 19 DRAFT BLUEPRINT: CURE FATIGUE

Reflection can provide an opportunity to regroup, find renewed motivation, and consider any additional creative approaches or avenues moving forward. Revisiting your own personal motivations and reminding yourself of the positive impact you have had through your efforts is also important.



**CREATING** actionable, contextually meaningful goals and accountability requires a thoughtful and strategic approach. It can involve crunching data and weeding through information to develop reasonable timelines and measurable goals. The relevant metrics may include not just representation but also employee satisfaction surveys, promotion rates, and more.

As an advocate you can help raise the following questions or raise your own familiarity with the process of goal-setting:

- Are the goals measurable and time-bound? What should be the time frame, and what percentage should be critical items?
  - Are the goals meaningful for a STEM enterprise?
  - What is the industry benchmark?
  - Were the goals set with a diverse group of stakeholders, including employees, leaders, and external partners?
  - Are there action plans that outline the strategies to achieve the goals?
  - What initiatives and resources will be needed to achieve DE&I goals?

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- What are the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will be used to measure progress?
    - Are the training and education programs for employees in STEM roles really relevant?
    - Has training on topics like unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and cultural competency received good feedback?
    - Are there clear accountability mechanisms, such as regular check-ins and reviews, to ensure that leaders and teams are actively working toward DE&I goals?
    - Is leadership open to feedback from employees and willing to make improvements accordingly?
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**UNDERSTANDING** and uncovering the most pressing diversity issues for an organization involves a systematic and empathetic approach. These may require diligent follow-through and honest analyses. Considering the current status of goals and achievements, especially if diversity fatigue is high, you can raise the following questions as an advocate:

- How recently was a diversity assessment conducted? This includes demographic data, surveys, and review of existing policies and practices.
  - Has the data been analyzed to identify disparities and/or numerical underrepresentation?
  - Have listening sessions been conducted for employees to share experiences? Was open and honest dialog enabled? What concerns or suggestions did employees raise?
  - What is the data from employee surveys telling us? Are there specific concerns around workplace experiences, opportunities for growth, and/or barriers faced?
  - Were any follow-up focus groups or interviews conducted with employees

from diverse backgrounds? Did we gain any deeper insight into their perspective and experiences? Was intersectionality considered in these sessions?

- Have we done external benchmarking to compare our metrics and understand best practices? How do we compare with peers, and where are we excelling or falling behind?
- Are we regularly conducting exit interviews with departing employees to understand their reasons for leaving and whether diversity or inclusion issues played a role?

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**RAISING** awareness about the progress being made and celebrating milestones is essential, especially when people are experiencing diversity fatigue. Consistent support of leadership can be very influential, reminding employees that DE&I is a long-term journey, and progress may not always be linear. Leadership can encourage patience and persistence while showing their commitment, being very transparent not just about progress but setbacks.

- Could the following approaches be used to augment and complement detailed annual diversity reports?
  - In employee communications, can leaders regularly communicate the importance of DE&I and acknowledge the progress being made?
  - It may also require some creative thinking about ways to give frequent but brief communications to keep the topic on people's radar without overwhelming them.
  - Short videos with concise updates on progress.
  - Real-life examples that highlight the positive impact.
  - Employee testimonials about their experiences with DE&I.
  - Short video messages from leadership sharing the importance of DE&I.
  - Infographics and visuals that are appealing and convey progress.
  - Social media campaigns using a dedicated hashtag to celebrate a specific day.

- DE&I awards to recognize individuals or teams for their outstanding contributions.
- Peer recognition to encourage employees to celebrate their colleagues' contributions.
- Gamification to create friendly challenges related to diversity milestones.

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**EMPOWERING** employee affinity groups and resource networks, often referred to as Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), can play a crucial role in diversity initiatives, especially when diversity fatigue is a concern. They offer a sense of community and empowerment, which can be especially important. Employees can find guidance and mentorship from colleagues who have faced similar challenges. Cultural activities facilitated by ERGs can rekindle enthusiasm and remind employees of the value of inclusion. These initiatives can provide fresh perspectives and insights. A collaborative approach between ERGs can lead to innovative solutions to diversity challenges. Their input can lead to positive changes that benefit all employees. The groups can provide additional means to channel this feedback to leadership.

- ERGs can showcase their positive impact through success stories, testimonials, and quantifiable outcomes, demonstrating that diversity initiatives are making a difference.
  - Can they offer opportunities to share experiences in a safe and supportive space? Facilitate more peer-to-peer mentorship and support?
  - Can ERGs focus on raising awareness about diversity issues within their community? Can they organize cultural events and celebrations that promote the richness of diversity?
  - Can ERGs serve as a leadership development platform allowing employees to gain valuable experience?
  - Can ERGs play a role in talent acquisition and retention, helping with recruitment strategies?
  - Can they offer flexible participation options reducing any pressure

associated with diversity fatigue? Can they offer resources related to mental health and well-being for coping with diversity fatigue?

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### THE GOOD FIGHT

Individual advocates can also continue to play a crucial role in diversity initiatives, even when diversity fatigue is a concern. They can continue to lead by example by modeling inclusive behavior and attitudes in their words, actions, and daily interactions. They can continue to educate themselves and others about DE&I issues through sharing information, articles, and resources with colleagues to raise awareness. Advocates can create opportunities for open and respectful dialogue by facilitating discussions and encouraging colleagues to share their perspectives and experiences. They can also offer mentorship and support to underrepresented colleagues by amplifying voices, helping to navigate challenges, and/or providing guidance for career development. Advocates can continue to network and collaborate with like-minded individuals within and outside the organization.

In my view, individual advocates play a critical role in fostering a culture of diversity and inclusion within organizations. While diversity fatigue may be present, their continued efforts can contribute to long-term positive change and a more equitable workplace. Staying informed about the latest research, trends, and best practices in diversity and inclusion can inform their advocacy efforts. Advocates can help sustain momentum by demonstrating patience and resilience, knowing that change takes time and that the commitment to diversity and inclusion remains strong.

As advocates, especially as diversity fatigue strikes hard, it is important to reflect on a self-care plan to prevent burnout. It is also important to reach out to others who may share your feelings. Engaging with like-minded advocates can provide much-needed support and fresh perspectives.

In this blueprint, I reflect on my own experiences as well as drawing from the experience of other sources including advocates, scholars, and thought leaders. I also draw inspiration from successful initiatives. For instance, The Women in Tech event

I keynoted – it started as a mere meeting and gained so much momentum over the years that it has become a movement inspiring the attendees with calls to action.

Creating actionable, contextually meaningful goals, ensuring accountability for DE&I outcomes, and sustaining progress requires ongoing dedication, resources, and a commitment from all levels of the organization. DE&I needs to be a part of everyday work conversations and the prevailing culture, a roadmap – integrating discussions into meetings, updates, and processes.

By using a combination of these strategies, advocates can raise awareness on the progress and milestones of the organization's DE&I efforts without overwhelming employees who may be experiencing diversity fatigue. The key is to maintain a balance between communication and action while emphasizing the positive impact of inclusion and equity.

Regularly reviewing progress, adapting new strategies as necessary, and communicating transparently can help CURE fatigue and sustain advocacy efforts.