

Better to Belong

Equitable experiences should happen every day, for every person.




Conversations
around **systemic
racism.**



An ongoing **global
pandemic.**



A **labor market**
in flux.

A woman with dark, curly hair is in the foreground, looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. She is holding a piece of paper. The background is a bright, modern office with large windows, wooden walls, and other people working at desks. Colorful sticky notes are visible on the wall and in the foreground.

Creating an inclusive organization needs to be at the top of the CEO's agenda. If not, the talent gap will only continue to grow.



Leaders can unlock
up to 5x more
human potential by
better managing
peoples' everyday
work experiences.

In doing so, leaders
can go beyond
inclusion and make
everyone feel like they
truly belong.

A group of five diverse young women are gathered in a bright, indoor setting, possibly a living room. They are all smiling and laughing, creating a warm and joyful atmosphere. One woman in the foreground is laughing heartily with her mouth wide open. Another woman to her left is also laughing, with her hands near her face. In the background, two more women are smiling and looking towards the group. The scene is lit with soft, natural light, suggesting a window in the background. The overall mood is one of genuine happiness and connection.

What does it mean to **belong**?




Belonging manifests across four categories:

having influence over decisions, being respected by your peers and managers, feeling comfortable speaking up and receiving sponsorship from a senior leader who can help you advance and grow.



**Diversity,
Inclusion and
Belonging**
are interrelated.



One does
not happen
**without the
other.**




When the right people are at the table
(**Diversity**) and have access to equitable
experiences (**Inclusion**) all people will
experience a culture of **Belonging**.

Leaders leave people Net Better Off (NBO) by being curious about their unique situations and the external forces (such as economic inequality, racism and environmental disasters) that shape their work lives.



A photograph of three men of different ethnicities and ages working together in a modern office. On the left, a man with a long black beard and an orange turban (Sikh) is looking at a laptop. In the center, a young man with blonde hair and a beard, wearing a colorful striped t-shirt, is pointing at the laptop screen. On the right, an older man with a grey beard and glasses hanging from his shirt is also looking at the laptop. They are all focused on the work. The background features a large window with a sign that says "MAKE IT HAPPEN" and a large green plant.

Why belonging matters.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow cardigan over a blue and white striped shirt, is sitting by a large window. She is holding a black coffee cup in her left hand and a smartphone in her right hand, looking out the window. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light from the sun, creating a soft glow. In the foreground, on a desk, there are blue headphones and another white coffee cup. The background shows a blurred cityscape with buildings and water.

Why should you care? Because your customers do. Promoters of brands believe that the companies they shop with should leave them Net Better Off (NBO).



74%

of Black customers feel diverse representation within the companies they support is important **(vs. 63% Asian and 68% of Hispanic customers).**

A woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a bright yellow blazer, is smiling and unwrapping a gift. She is holding a yellow ribbon. The background is a warm, rustic interior with wooden shelves, a laptop, and various decorative items like plants and books.

69%

of Promoters feel that diverse representation within the companies they **support is important.**



54%

of Promoters feel companies they support should leave them **NBO (vs. 30% of Passives and 23% of Detractors).**



63%

of Gen Z customers feel
diverse representation within
the companies they support
is important (**vs. 54% of
Baby Boomers**).

The background of the slide features a blurred image of a person in motion, overlaid with numerous vertical light streaks in various colors including red, blue, green, and yellow. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

What is the path **forward**?

We found **10 everyday experience levers**
(4 are essential) that leaders must get right.



**Essential
People Skills**

Empowerment
Communication
Diversity
Customer-Centric

**Organizational
Factors**


Skilling
Dependence
Governance
Technology

**Individual
Factors**

Self-Efficacy
Growth Mindset

10 everyday experience levers:

Empowerment	Making people feel that they have the autonomy to support advancement.
Communication	Sharing relevant information when people need it and delivering with empathy and transparency.
Diversity	Holding leaders accountable for welcoming, progressing and valuing the contributions all people at all levels.
Customer-Centric	Valuing and rewarding behaviors that drive positive customer experience.
Skilling	Providing opportunities for skill building to meet business objectives.
Dependence	Rules and processes that limit people's contribution to achieving desired outcomes.
Governance	Practices and processes that impede people's agility.
Technology	Providing the appropriate infrastructure and real-time digital support which keeps people connected.
Self-Efficacy	Believing in one's own ability to meet work demands.
Growth Mindset	Enabling people with greater ownership and influence over business outcomes.



When workers are NBO, they are
2x more likely to
feel like they belong...

unfortunately, **1/3**
of employees feel they
don't belong.



The good news? By getting the traditional moments that matter right, leaders can drive up NBO scores by up to

3.2x

Even better: When you get the day-to-day experiences right, you can increase NBO even more, by up to

5x

A long-exposure photograph of a modern transit station. The image features vibrant, streaked light trails in shades of blue, pink, and yellow, suggesting motion and energy. The architecture includes a curved ceiling with exposed pipes and lights. The text "We still have a **long way** to go." is overlaid in the center.

We still have a **long way** to go.

People in need of skilling, LGBTQ+, race and ethnic minorities and women have the longest runway to an equitable work experience. When everyday experiences are managed better, various levels of human potential can be unlocked. Women have the most to gain with the **opportunity to maximize their potential by 4.7x.**



Workers with
less education

3.6x



Women

4.7x



Racial & Ethnic Minorities

4x



LGBTQ+

3.7x

Numbers refer to the uptick in NBO when the moments that matter and experience levers are maximized.



Leaders can begin to foster a sense of belonging by **focusing on the essential people skills.**

Give your people power

Change the narrative around work and recognize that today's workers need autonomy, not a task list.

Give people opportunities to succeed and agency over their outcomes. Our "Future of Work" research has shown that empowerment by way of autonomy increases overall well-being.

To feel empowered, people must be confident in their business acumen. Employ skilling efforts to train your people in hard and soft skills to make meaningful contributions in organizations.



Systemically embed diversity and inclusion

Be intentional about recruiting (for example, widen sourcing pools by inviting ERGs to participate in the process). This will create new opportunities to infuse DEI into every aspect of the business—from development to retention to growth and beyond.

Own where you are in the DEI journey, and implement actions (e.g., conduct parity studies at the intersection of gender and race) to create equitable advancement pathways for all talent.

Pull the experience levers that influence how much people feel they belong in the workplace. It's not just about having people from diverse backgrounds to meet quotas and goals, instead it's leveraging and valuing what your diverse talent can bring to the table.

Engage with empathy and transparency

Use tech-enabled engagement platforms to build community among all workers, including in-office, hybrid and remote workers. The goal is to break down barriers between workers to engender a sense of connection, trust and transparency.

When setting goals, don't be afraid to share your data. Be transparent with where your company is in the journey. This will not only open up a dialogue but reveal actions the company can take to bridge the gap.

Prioritize customer-centricity

Prioritize recruiting individuals with a customer-centric mindset. Building a workforce with the right mindset will sustain this mentality within the company culture.

Connect talent to customer outcomes by helping them see the human needs of those they are working to serve. Reward customer-centric behaviors.



For more information



CHRISTIE SMITH

Senior Managing Director
Global Lead of Talent & Organization



BLAIR TAYLOR

Managing Director,
Talent & Organization, Inclusion,
Diversity & Equity North America Lead



DR. ELLA BELL SMITH

Professor of Management
The Tuck School of Business,
Dartmouth College

Acknowledgments

Research Lead: Tchicaya Ellis Robertson, Ph.D.

Marketing Content Lead: Courtney Bonanno

Project team

Kelly Monahan, Reggie Romain, Corbin Lazier, Pragati Sharma, Juliana Azuero, Janet Krstevski, Nandini Nayak, Gail Strachan, Ryan Weeks, Issam Alanqar, Ilhan Scheer, Alex Schaper, Paige Walker, Justin Chatigny, Heather Spring, Karen Saverino, Tracey Seward, Marjorie Arnold, Noelani Kimura, Rachel Trignano, Harish Kumar, Melissa Wehmeyer, Group SJR

About the Research

Accenture Research interviewed 33 workers in May of 2020 and surveyed 6,998 workers and 3,520 customers between September and November 2020. Data was collected in 14 countries within four regions: North America, EMEA, Asia Pacific, and Latin America. The study includes responses from frontline and enablement workers and customers within seven industries which include: banking, insurance, healthcare, government, retail, telecommunications, and utilities. Factor analyses were used to determine the People Experience levers, while Linear Regression was used to determine their relationship worker outcomes.

About Accenture

Accenture is a global professional services company with leading capabilities in digital, cloud and security. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries, we offer Strategy and Consulting, Interactive, Technology and Operations services—all powered by the world's largest network of Advanced Technology and Intelligent Operations centers. Our 537,000 people deliver on the promise of technology and human ingenuity every day, serving clients in more than 120 countries. We embrace the power of change to create value and shared success for our clients, people, shareholders, partners and communities.

Visit us at www.accenture.com

About Accenture Research

Accenture Research shapes trends and creates data driven insights about the most pressing issues global organizations face. Combining the power of innovative research techniques with a deep understanding of our clients' industries, our team of 300 researchers and analysts spans 20 countries and publishes hundreds of reports, articles and points of view every year. Our thought-provoking research—supported by proprietary data and partnerships with leading organizations, such as MIT and Harvard—guides our innovations and allows us to transform theories and fresh ideas into real-world solutions for our clients.

For more information, visit

www.accenture.com/research