



**LIVELY
PARADOX**

Art Museum Case Study





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THE SITUATION

A fine arts museum vowed to support Black Lives Matter (BLM) by making a public statement and hosting a series of listening sessions. Employees possessed a wide-range of sentiments about the commitment the organization had, both externally and internally, to social justice, inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility and sustainability.



Leading Through Difference™



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THE BACKGROUND

Shortly after the murder of George Floyd, the local police asked to use the company's parking lot to stage a response to the protests and riots nearby. The security team approved the request, however the image of the police in the lot gave the impression of organizational support for the police at the expense of BLM. Subsequently, the police were asked to park their vehicles elsewhere.

The listening sessions had a wide-range of responses from employees that were not necessarily aligned across identities. However, older employees wanted to work within the system and younger employees were speaking of dismantling the museum altogether.

The CEO and COO were worried when employees called; they could understand how they needed a comprehensive approach that brought everyone along – *together*.



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THE ASSESSMENT

The organization has a compelling mission statement that galvanizes employees around the work they do. They also had several relationships with various groups in order to engage the community. And lastly, the organization had begun re-evaluating the way they displayed and labeled artwork in order to do two things – acknowledge the racist history of some of the pieces and to highlight the work of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) artists.

They needed a way to help people feel inspired about the work and to leverage the unique differences of employees in order to increase revenue and expand the impact of the mission.



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THE RECOMMENDATION

1

High Performance Workshop

Establish long and short term diversity efforts to enhance the existing organization's strategic plan.

2

Training Session Pre-work & Assessments

Avoid tell-all, group therapy sessions. Pre-work and homework conducted as a reflective personal activities to reduce shame and increase learning.

3

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training Sessions

In-person learning sessions that begin with the basics and progress to more intellectually challenging and emotionally charged topics. These are designed to do 3 things: create shared language and raise the level of awareness at the personal level where prejudices lie, shift participant mindsets from cultural destructiveness (conscious and unconscious) to cultural proficiency, and finally, dive deep into the unique opportunities associated with race and racial inequities without traumatizing marginalized racial groups.



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THE OUTCOME

“I wanted to thank you for a wonderful second session with [our] staff & volunteers. I felt you both did an incredible job presenting and engaging each of us by meeting us where we are in our various levels of DEI awareness. And that could not have been easy. I walked away with an increased self-awareness and many tools that I can implement immediately to further my own DEI journey! Especially, understanding that this is a journey-not a destination, returning to neutral and what I am bringing into a difficult conversation.

Thanks again and I’m looking forward to [more work] with Lively Paradox.”

— *Employee Feedback*



We help difference get along.

Through a compassionate, human-based approach to workplace culture, we help develop leaders who are prepared to lead every member of their teams to succeed. We inspire leaders to reach for ridiculous heights by leveraging our different, yet shared humanity, one action at a time.

Contact us at

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